







REV. J. D. BARBEE, D.D.

# LIFE AND MEMORIES OF REV. J. D. BARBEE

(Doctor in Divinity)

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BY HORACE M. DU BOSE

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## CHAPTER I.

### CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

THE early scenes in the life of the great and good man who is the subject of this sketch were depicted by himself in terms of unaffected simplicity. He was born in Lawrence County, Ala., March 16, 1832. Like many another successful man of the South, he was descended from the stock of the French Huguenots, drawing through the currents of his ancestral blood the lively traditions of religious zeal and manly freedom. His father was Capt. James Barbee, whose antecedents carried the history of the family back to the James River region of Virginia and to colonial times. His mother, whose maiden name was Ready, transmitted to him a strain of Irish blood and

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not a few of the characteristics of the Gaelic race. This heredity accounted for some of his peculiarly strong traits and for the optimism which was so pronounced a quality of his mind, and which, coalescing with his faith, made him a man of extraordinary fortitude.

His paternal grandfather was a colonel in the American army during the War of the Revolution, and was attached to the command of Daniel Morgan, the eccentric Virginian general who became the hero of the battle of the Cowpens. In recognition of his military services, Colonel Barbee received from the government, after the war, a grant of land in the State of Alabama. Almost immediately thereafter he removed his family to that commonwealth, where his descendants continued to live for two generations. He died, in a good old age, just across the border in Tennessee, where his ashes and those of his wife still rest, the graves having been identified by the grandson some years before his own death.

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Capt. James Barbee, the father of Dr. Barbee, served as a soldier in the ranks under Gen. Andrew Jackson in the war of 1812. The title of captain of militia was later conferred upon him by the State of Alabama. A military manner was native to him. He walked erect, and his spirit was suited to his frame. In the rearing of his sons he exercised "stern authority and inflexible discipline." But he appears to have been an honorable man, true-hearted, and held in esteem by his neighbors. He was possessed of but small worldly means; indeed, there was little in the condition of the family to qualify the naked term of poverty. This fact was referred to by the son in giving, in later years, accounts of his early experiences, not by way of doting on his own advance, but out of the frankness and genuineness of his nature. There was never in him the shadow or suggestion of either priggishness or the cant of affected humility. Conscious of his mission and of a worthy purpose

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in living, he left the story of his past ungar-  
nished by any friction of pride and unhelped by  
undue stress of its limitations. In this, as in  
else, he shared the spirit of the great.

The boyhood of Dr. Barbee was spent on his  
father's farm, a small one in a not over-fertile  
region. The land was indifferently improved,  
and the conditions of the country were primi-  
tive. There was, therefore, in the early sur-  
roundings of the boy little save the simple  
home love to inspire the beginnings of great-  
ness; but the son of the poor soldier-farmer  
took up the burdens of life in that heroic way  
in which he bore them to the end. Precocity  
of talent and spirit fell in with exactions and  
necessity laid upon tender years. At the age  
of nine he began to follow the plow. The  
recollection of this early dedication to labor  
was to him a source of pride and satisfaction  
in all his after years, and he was accustomed  
to dwell upon it in conversation with his chil-  
dren when they had come to share his maturest

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thoughts. The exhilaration which sprang up in his young heart when left by his father to the plow and the growing furrow was not wholly of the conceit of precocity, but came much more of a sense of the dignity of labor and of a destiny uncovered with each turn of the plowshare. The world has not yet read the full meaning of the things which divide between toil and labor. One is bondage; the other, a token of liberty. One is grind and wear that we may eat bread; the other, the upward carrying of the life that lives not by bread alone. Than labor there is no more ennobling word in the vocabularies of men. Blessed indeed is that youth which, doomed to eat its bread in toil, can yet turn that toil into the labor that patiently waits for fruit in higher things!

The youth of the man in whose memory these words are indited was visited by a vision. It is not surprising, therefore, that there should have settled about the childish

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life and figure unusual manifestations, such as should have been remarked upon by maturer people. The most pronounced of these manifestations were a childish self-mastery and a straightforwardness of spirit and conduct. The worlds were, in some way, builded into his consciousness; and, so far as his own need required, he saw from the beginning to the end. From his first experience as a plowboy to the close of his distinguished and useful career as a teacher of men, he displayed the highest qualities of self-reliance. When once he had put his hand to the plow, he was not to be turned back or swerved from his purpose.

A seriousness that at points became somber touched the boyhood recalled herein, yet it had its passages of lightness and perfect youthful happiness. The Saturday afternoon holiday at the mill, while waiting for the "turn" of corn to be made into grist, brought freedom from care. A hook dropped in the mill head brought the coveted string of sunfish and the

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unvarying pleasure of the fisherman. There were times also for sports, for bird-trapping, rabbit-stalking, and opossum-baiting. Then there were the neighborhood visitings, and the riding to church and "singing school" on Sundays. These were the saviors of the boy life of the old time, and remained in this life, even to its latest years, a reminiscence as fresh as the dew on the corn in June. The child was singularly dutiful and obedient. "His whole life was a life of truth," writes one who knew those early years; "he was utterly incapable of falsehood. I never knew him to deviate, or to fail to meet the requirement laid upon him, even if the task imposed seemed unreasonable." This history illustrates the belief that the man is made in the boy. Seldom has manhood been more completely prophesied beforehand. Moral habitudes settled themselves in his character, and obedience became the rule and law of his life.

The limited fortunes of his family and the



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conditions of the country reduced of necessity the chances of his early education. The training which he received was extremely rudimentary, but it was characteristic of him that he should have displayed an early and extraordinary thirst for knowledge. It was equally characteristic that he should have fallen, unaided, upon those unusual and effective expedients which led him up to a feeding of his intellectual hunger. There is a beatitude for those who thirst after the intellectual truth as there is for those who thirst after the spiritual. In fact, the two are the lesser and the greater words of the one benediction. The sequence is certain, "They shall be filled;" and this filling is as different from the modern pedagogical cramming as the drip of Hymettic honey is different from the treacle of the glucose mill. The fashion of the old-time scholar can come no more until we have the old-time hunger driving heart and intellect to one repast.

As though fortune, not hitherto over-kind,

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grew sinister, when at last a teacher was found for young Barbee he proved but a bungler. The cold truth is stated that "he was not much of a man and still less of a scholar." To his incompetency he added this above all: that out of a petty spirit he sought to heap indignity upon the heads of the little ones intrusted to his care.

If the reader should be tempted to think that this biography throws a halo of unboylikeness about the early days of its subject, let this story present, in relief, the other side. There was a rebellion in this "school of Tyrannus," and young Barbee was the head of it. The rebellion was accentuated by a vigorous physical resistance to the methods of the "do-the-boys" master and by an equally vigorous denunciation in speech. This episode might have proved serious, even disastrous, to the future of the pupil, but, on reflection, the master acknowledged his error, and there was patched up a truce which continued until the short

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“subscription” pretext expired. In grave and reverend age, the once refractory pupil, accustomed to hear the word of command, and not without chastenings, could cite this as the only case in which he had ever defied authority.

To procure the means with which to buy books and pay tuition in the brief winter terms of the neighborhood school, young Barbee hired himself to pick cotton and perform other labor on near-by farms. So carefully husbanded was his time during these seasons, and so ardent was his desire for letters, that he carried his text-books with him to the table and studied while he ate. His mother prepared for his use a student lamp, more primitive than that which once lighted the cell of the hermit or the monk. It was made of an eggshell filled with swine oil, and supplied with a cotton fiber wick. By this imperfect illumination he pored over unnumbered pages and laid the foundations of that astonishing knowledge and

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that mastery of classic speech which distinguished his long career in the pulpit.

Self-education is a misnomer, and the self-made man is the Frankenstein creation of dogmatic fancy or credulous ignorance. Every man who attains must be taught by some spirit, visible or invisible. Some spirit other than himself is the finisher of every man. The spirit master in the book becomes real to the earnest out-of-college student, sometimes more real than the master in the flesh, and by so much is the self-helped student made to excel. Nothing but the exceptional, and that of the most extraordinary nature, can supply the lack of the college and the living master. When that extraordinary thing happens, we can only wonder; we dare not make of it a precedent, we dare not construct upon it a theory of education. Young Barbee had masters. He found them where he might; and, finding, he followed them with diligence and perseverance. Of his few early teachers, the one who seems to have

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impressed him most was one J. B. Speake, a Virginian by birth, father of the late Judge Henry Clay Speake, and grandfather of the two well-known jurists of that name now living in Huntsville, Ala. For this man, who appears to have been a preceptor as well as a teacher, the pupil preserved a great fondness and a loyal memory to the end of his life. Blessed always is the memory of such a teacher! Into such blessedness the pupil was himself to enter before the crown of manhood had fully settled upon his brows.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE SCHOOL-TEACHER.

THE path of the teacher is almost inevitably trodden by those men who through self-help and self-instruction force their way to success and renown. The lists would hardly fail of this revelation in any of the walks of usefulness or public service. The best way to learn a thing is to teach it to others. The world's high masters who had their seats at Athens and Jerusalem entered perfectly into their own messages only while shaping and inditing them as precedents for the ages. The aspiring mind, made conscious of deficiencies, resorts to this expedient because of its twofold use. In the struggle after truth and the liberation of life, it is not a question of perfectness in the instruments of help, but of their availableness. The lesser weakness must help the greater; the less-

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er ignorance must instruct that which is blind or infantile. In this way only can perfect strength and perfect knowledge come to the earth. Necessity is thus laid at the door of life that entrance may be assured to the greatest number. Men with iron in their elements must have a strong flame blown upon them in the fusing. The cross flame of the teacher and learner in one is ordained for the nature which carries either refractory or exceptionally precious substances. The rush taper penetrates no opaqueness, but the X-ray reveals "the joints and the marrow."

When but eighteen years of age, young Barbee felt sufficient confidence in his own toilsomely acquired knowledge of letters to offer himself as a teacher for his neighborhood school. The crucial test of his life came when he found himself accepted for that office. Diffident and distrustful of his equipment, he hesitated, then entered with characteristic purpose upon the task which he felt was to sift

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him as wheat. The work of a teacher proved congenial, however, and he showed aptitude for the calling. For two years he taught this school, and it is altogether safe to venture that the most industrious pupil in it, and the one who made the most distinct progress, was the young master himself. His ambition was not only to keep ahead of his pupils, but so far ahead as to be able to render honest and faithful service in his work. This, as can be imagined, was, with his meager attainments, no easy task, even with the untutored minds he was to direct. What vigils of the night, what porings over unproved text-books, what mental self-disciplines, were invoked before he stood in confidence before his pupils, to each of whom he felt bound to account!

The teachers of to-day may boast more affluent methods, but it is doubtful if these methods are always effective to the same degree as were those of the old time which came of the crux of necessity. In teaching, our rustic



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pedagogue followed no time-worn system, but made a task of giving each pupil his best service in a class to himself. This method furnished an opportunity for personal influence and for the direct ministry of the teacher, which are important elements in education and the passing of which gives pause in the study of the problems of present-day teaching. Not only were the text-books studied a step beyond the foremost of his pupils, but the character and need of each pupil were studied with equal care. Thus after two years he was able to deliver such as remained with him into the same inheritance into which he himself had entered, and with the breath and enthusiasm of his own spirit upon them. The cross flame fused teacher and pupil into a sympathy of effort, and the cross rays involved them in a common irradiation.

Master and teacher to himself as to his classes, he came in after years to regard the little log schoolhouse as his true *Alma Mater*, and

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facetiously referred to it as "Bark Log College." When, at the height of his career, if asked—as he often was—where he had graduated, he named this as his college, slyly adding that he had once been its president. In the humble distinction of this rustic literary maternity he was content to go on, until one of the oldest and most dignified institutions of learning in the country conferred upon him that title of theology which he so worthily wore.

The reading habit which began with the boy in the farmhouse took a definite turn during his rustic teachership. It must have led him, even during this season, over a fairly extended field of literature, and one also of pleasing variety. Finding in his hand the key which unlocked the doors of knowledge, he restrained the frenzy which would look into forbidden chambers to explore Bluebeard mysteries, and used his power rather to enter into "Kings' treasuries." In his time and section the read-

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ing of Byron was common amongst those who affected literature even to a slight extent. Indeed, that bard, whose fame was then fresh and untested, was, particularly in the southern half of America, accepted as the oracle of sentiment and the arbiter of the human passions. There was something in the tragic action of his verse, something in the pageantries of his dramatic numbers, and something in the mixed coloring of his heraldry and his contradictory love of freedom that harmonized with the spirit of the Old South. Thomas Moore, the contemporary lyrist of love and the vagrant fancy, was a star ascendant in the same sky, and also potent in the horoscope of its sentiment. But the rustic schoolmaster, notwithstanding the Attic taste upon his lips, disallowed the common verdict and turned away from these erotic anthologies, thus anticipating the literary verdict of fifty years later.

It was about this time that he was led, un-

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der wise and happy advice, to fix his devotion to Shakespeare as the first of secular classics. That potent chance came about in this way: During his teachership at "Bark Log College" he felt the first distinct impressions leading him into the ministry of the Church. Conscious of his literary defects, and especially of his poverty of speech, he applied to one whom he trusted in literary as in spiritual matters for direction to some special exercise to which he might betake himself to remedy his deficiencies. The answer, instant and direct, was: "Read Shakespeare." From this time forward Shakespeare became his chief literary illumination. Indeed, so constant and undivided was his devotion to the works of the great dramatist that it might be said that after the Bible Shakespeare was the one book he knew. He explored it; he preëmpted great sections of its thought liturgies and repeated the hierarchical dicta which he heard uttered in its high places. In after years this familiarity ripened

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into an astonishing originality and distinctiveness of expression which distinguished him amongst the pulpit men of his day. One of the charms of his style, both in preaching and conversation, was the fragrance which it carried in quotation from the lore of his favorite master.

The first sight which I remember to have had of Dr. Barbee was as he stood upon the Conference floor delivering an address on the wise use of books. The advice given in that address to seekers after knowledge was that of a true literary cicerone. There were betrayed no signs of early literary limitations, nor was there reservation or hesitancy. The voice was one of authority; he had been into the land of pomegranates and giants, and brought back a good report. During the long time of his service at the head of the Publishing House he was more than a *Book Agent* in the Church. He was zealous in his wish to inspire its young men with a love for books

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and a yearning after the treasures in them. Ovid relates that when Apollo went to give aid in building the city of Alcolthoë he laid his lyre against the builders' heaps, that his hands might be free to labor. The celestral throbings of the shell were communicated to the stones. When, therefore, the citadel rose, and while it stood through changeful years, its every stone had a tongue of music, and sang with its fellows in the chorus of borrowed melodies. There are books that to many have borrowed from this man's use and interpretation of them a new meaning and a new voice of music withal.

It must not be understood, however, that the youth of twenty who quitted the post of teacher in the log schoolhouse to take up, in the humblest way, the work of a Methodist preacher had even begun to attain to the mastery here described. The sun of its day was not even risen; the twilight only tokened its coming. Even English orthography was not a

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perfectly mastered art with him. There had been little incentive to the employment of his pen. Only scraps of composition had been attempted. His first formal letter appears to have been written after this date. He had never been long enough away from the paternal home to call for a written message, his business relations had been of the simplest character, and he had cherished no serious sentiment such as usually nourishes an epistolary thirst in youth. This makes the fluency and force of the pen which he afterwards employed the more wonderful, nor the less wonderful his discriminating use of words which gave to his public speech the keenness and resilience of a steel blade.

To be sure, his pen was never prolific; his voice was the almost exclusive vehicle of his message. But when employed, his pen showed that it was not a stranger to use, and that the use which invoked it had never been an idle one. When one undertakes to inquire how

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things like these have come to pass, the charm and novelty of the story often obscure the homelier but ultimate interest—namely, the lesson by which another may profit. As these pages grow they are illumined by a hope, matching the love which prompts their writing, that the words and records of this life may prove, even as candle lighteth candle, the enkindling of nobleness in others called out of like obscurity and limitations.



## CHAPTER III.

### DOUBTS AND HESITATIONS.

IN the ranks of the serious and active members of society there are two classes of men. One class is composed of those who have brought the mental and ethical misadjustments of their youth over to their manhood, or who have allowed the hesitations and indecision of their youth to become permanent. The other class is made up of those who fought out the battles of their doubts and distractions in a time when youthful courage and enthusiasm conspired to make victory complete. Wise must be the philosopher who can define the springs and trace the course of the influences which lead to such early and happy triumphs. The ultimate problem of education settles itself here. The training which is not ethical and character-making at bottom is specious

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and often enslaving. The largest ideal of education is not present completeness, not *graduation*; but liberation, empowerment. Why should we at last have to unlearn half our learning? Let the teacher and reformer whose field of discovery and effort is youth look well to this.

Along the furrows of an Alabama cotton field, on the long Sunday rides back from the log meetinghouse, or from the more distant village church, and, later, within the precincts of "Bark Log College," the youth destined to station and service was settling the lines and mastery of his own future. Sometimes the strife ran high and the issue seemed doubtful, but a divinity shapes well the end of every life that wills what it wills. Will power was the Samson secret of James D. Barbee. The red corpuscles of his blood overflowed the white, and the gray matter in his cranial cavities showed the hematite in its layers. His manhood fiber testified to the stored-up sun and

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brawn in him and to the character decision of his healthy youth. This is man at his best. The act and prize of war without and within, the long-meditated and at last triumphant purpose—these mark the highest points of virility, physical and intellectual. Our subject illustrated each in its order. The sun-hardened muscle of the plowboy that successfully contended with the tyrant of the ferrule was the forerunner of the healthy and well-developed brain lobes, and these became the correlates of a spirit of exceptional strength and fortitude. The pose and stride of that life betrayed manliness, and that at its full.

Having fought to submission such doubts as obtruded upon his simple faith in God and the verities of law and duty, the youthful pedagogue faced new distractions in the choice of a life calling. It has happened that most men destined to the ministry of the Church have had their seasons of toying with the other and more lucrative or fascinating callings. It

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was with this man as with others. Both medicine and the law allured him for a time. His father's family physician, who had read medicine in another doctor's office, and who from being an illiterate man came, through his own efforts, to be an oracle in his profession, was a doctor of the old school. He was, in fact, a type of the best manhood of his time—an intrepid, tireless servant of the people and a philanthropist of unmixed motives, who saw in his profession not a secular vocation but a ministry to mankind. This doctor, Meadows by name, inspired the young school-teacher with an ambition to emulate his toils and devotion. Long years of exposure in autumnal rains and winter frosts tell even on the Æsculapian frame. The man of iron and herbs had at last, because of the twinges and bindings of rheumatism, to desert the saddle. He then betook himself to a gig, in which he traveled to the end of his professional journey, changeless in his self-devotion and love of men.

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The heroic character of this ideal constituted the chief difficulty or temptation. The heart of the rustic hungered to give heroic and self-sacrificing service. He held himself dedicated to his kind, the bondservant of his generation. The self-denying ministry of a country doctor met the martyr ideal. There was in it a manifest function, an eye service. Moreover, it created a large chance for the Galilean spirit. It was ultimate crucifixion. Its claims might easily silence those of the more direct evangel. Those who in after years heard him describe in dramatic and affectionate language the gentleness and devotion of the "good physician" understood what a hold the profession and example of the old practitioner had upon his youthful admirer.

A long time he held himself dedicated to medicine, and it was only the broader prospect and the stronger fascination of the law that turned him from his earlier purpose. This substitution of choice came as the result of a

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wider secular view and of the advance of his mind into a more technical literature. The bucolic spell was broken when the untraveled "Bark Log" school-teacher visited the shire town on legal business of his own. There, in the grim and dingy temple of justice, he surveyed for the first time the seats of the mighty. There he heard the uttered potencies which shook the destinies of a whole county. The judicial forum, with skillfully contending advocates and learned justice, eclipsed the profession of pills and charmed him away from his first love. Here, he saw, was the place of action; here the gate of civic opportunity. Here also was the equal chance of service. To be the servant of justice is to serve God and men. The ardent mind pursued after its new dream. The rudiments of the law were explored. The prospect was inviting. In the vision's foreground grew the tree of knowledge whose fruit was "to be desired to make one wise." For a time obedience to the vision was complete.

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But there came another and a last parting of the way, and one not far removed from the first. Before he could perfect any plans for realizing his dreams of the law, the always obedient youth heard in unmistakable tones the higher call and immediately put aside all thought of a secular profession to join the army of itinerant Methodist preachers. The disciples of Wesley and Asbury were then making matter for one of the most unique and romantic passages in the history of the modern Church—a history marked by zeal, self-denial, and the winning of multitudes of souls for the kingdom of Christ. It was the period of the Methodist missions to the slaves of the Southern plantations, and of the evangel to the scattered settlements of the Western frontier. The book which bears the record of the doings of the men of those days is another Acts of the Apostles. When the young Alabama school-teacher entered this devoted fellowship, he brought with him the spirit of an apostle.

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But though he thus gave up forever the dreams of those worldly callings which had fascinated him in their order, he never lost that special interest in physicians and lawyers which this early affinity made natural. A substantial evidence of this was seen in the companies of honorable and brilliant professional men—physicians, advocates, and jurists—whom he always numbered among his admirers and friends in those places where his ministry was had. He was always a lawyer's preacher—that is, his sermons always appealed to men of forensic mental movement. This made him also a preacher's preacher, and, in fact, a preacher for all men who followed high ideals of justice, honor, faith, and human kindness. The greatest sermon of his life—measured by the test of appeal to men—was a funeral oration, delivered before the bench and bar of Tennessee, over the body of a distinguished member of the profession. This discourse provoked a profoundly reverent feeling,



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and received unstinted commendations from the most eminent men of the State.

When he was giving his testimony in the famous war claim case before a committee of the United States Senate, he was asked the formal question: "Are you a lawyer?" "No," he modestly replied; "like necessity, I know no law." But the penetration and knowledge which he displayed in describing judicial processes, outlining through all its stages an intricate, hypothetical procedure, caused grave Senators to both look and express their surprise. He drew lawyers to his ministry not only because his method of thought was highly judicial and his language clear and exact, but also because his life and walk were proof of the simple but lofty argument of his faith. When at the height of his influential mingling with men he was often asked by eminent lawyers if he had not been bred to the bar. This question was a natural one. The manner and frame of his life accorded with law.

## CHAPTER IV.

### RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

A BEAUTIFUL and strongly expressed sentiment in a letter referring to the early life of Dr. Barbee runs thus: "Were I with you, I would uncover my heart to you, that you might behold the unfolding of his life and see the development of his character, in which dwelt his chief greatness. . . . His spirit of obedience was especially manifested in his relations to the Church. . . . He lost sight of self entirely." This testimony is of exceptional value because of its certitude and because of the fact to which it points—namely, his religious experience. So marked a personality, so strong a character, and so clear a sense of duty and manhood must have had their exposition in a genuine experience of grace. This also was "a man sent from God."

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While yet a boy struggling in the throes of an unshapen ambition of life, he was soundly converted, receiving in the moment a witness which seems never to have been eclipsed or impaired. This event in his life occurred at a Methodist revival meeting conducted near his native place by the Rev. Edgar M. Swope, a local preacher and a well-to-do planter of that region. His love for this man, whom he acknowledged as his spiritual father, was very tender and suffered no abatement during his more than sixty years of after life. His very latest memories appear to have been of him, and of the time when his simple boyish heart “was strangely warmed” under his preaching.

The new birth was ever to him the clearest and surest of doctrines, for he read the record not only in the written Word—which he held to be absolute—but also he read it from the fleshly tablets of his own heart. The clear witness of the Spirit which he received in his conversion put his faith beyond doubt or the

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possibility of perversion. To be born again was, with him, to rise and live in newness of life, to be put in the way of attaining and perfecting that holiness without which no man can see the Lord. He was, during all his ministry, justly impatient of any teaching which minimized or gave a secondary importance to the doctrine of regeneration.

Some twenty years ago, or less, a recrudescence of the old controversy about Christian perfection and the processes of sanctification began to vex the Church. Dr. Barbee was then in the ripeness of his mental strength, and was one of the most influential personalities in the Church. He at once set himself in opposition to the vagaries of this movement, opposing them with characteristic vigor and distinctness of utterance. He believed unreservedly in the sanctification taught in and demanded by the Scriptures, and it was his zeal for the scriptural doctrine that led him to take so decided a stand against those who,

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through erroneous and misguided interpretations, perverted it. A sermon preached by him on this subject before the Florida Conference so greatly impressed that body that a formal request was made for its publication in permanent form. The printed discourse was widely circulated, and it is probable that nothing of its compass contributed more to the rest and settlement of the Church's mind in that time of theological distress. The day may come again, should history repeat itself, when it will be of use to another generation of Methodists.

Personal experiences are not the sources from which doctrines are to be drawn. The inerrant Word alone is the repository of religious truth, and what is not contained therein, or cannot be clearly proven therefrom, is not to be required as a matter of belief. But if there be a double testimony of the living Word and the living spirit of the believer, his confidence is not to be shaken. The man of

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whom we write was fortified in this confidence and remained steadfast to the end. In the light of his boyhood experience he walked, as it grew more and more unto the perfect day. His theology, as his experience, was singularly clear and orthodox at every point, and yet his tolerance and charity for the opinions of others were genuinely catholic. He entered into the universal fellowship of those who believe.

It was a maxim of his that a serious heresy in religious faith was the token of an unregenerate motive, or else of a radical moral lapse. A dramatic illustration of this may be given. The scene is supposed to have fallen out somewhere near the middle years of his ministry. A man of superior intellectual powers, well reported of in a general way, and previously understood to be an orthodox professor, seeking an interview with his pastor, said: "Doctor, I am in great trouble."

"What is the nature and extent of it, brother?" tenderly asked the pastor.

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"Why," answered the other with studious deliberation, "I have come to doubt—to deny."

"What?" earnestly pursued the pastor.

"O, almost everything!" coldly returned the heretic. "I especially doubt and deny the need of the atonement, since I have ceased utterly to believe in a judgment to come."

The faithful teacher of men was equal to his opportunity and to the demands of the message he bore. With a sudden and penetrating look he turned upon his visitor and said: "Brother, your trouble is manifestly more of the heart than of the intellect. You have broken at least one of the commandments of God—done it in secret; and in an attempt to satisfy a conscience that will not let you rest you consent to doubt—to deny—the truth itself."

Brusquely, almost angrily, the man replied and departed with little show of courtesy or ceremony; but not many days afterwards he returned. The arrow had found the joints of the harness. A confession was made which

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laid bare a secret sin of uncleanness that had long festered in the life, and of which the heresy was only the gangrene.

In laying himself out for the holy calling of the ministry, the young lay disciple became the evangelist naturally. No shock of conviction, no change of the currents of his experience was necessary in the transition. He had not to be made ready, only to be shown the duty. His feet fell into the new path, carrying the movement to which they had answered in the old. The life of a Methodist preacher in that day was tinged with asceticism. The espousal of it amounted practically to a vow of poverty. The dress of the itinerant was distinctive, and his manners and tastes were expected to be unworldly. Habits of devotion more or less strict were observed, and hardships were the common portion. The Methodists had not then wholly ceased to be "a peculiar people," but less change had come to the ministry than to the laity. The traditions



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of the generations which expressed their religious life in "justification by faith and a shilling a quarter" still held sway over the men of the saddlebags and the hymn book. These traditions accorded well with the impulses of the young rustic, the highest passion of whose life was to be broken upon his ideal. The straight coat became the sinewy young frame, and the broad-brimmed hat only deepened the natural shade of solemnity upon the manly young brow. The still immature features had to affect no dolorous aspects nor smirk themselves into padlock security against levity in order to attest the sanctity which dwelt within. A laborious, thoughtful boyhood had kept the face a mirror of sobriety; but, like a mirror, it failed not to reflect in smiles, sunnier than sunshine, the lights which fell upon it. The voice needed to borrow no solemn intonations, no pectoral profundos, to fit it to its message. It was a hearty, well-confined voice, mellow, honest, and as natural as the sound of waters

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or the notes of winds. It was never a loud or boisterous voice, but always colloquial, even-toned, showing that it had been mated to the thought which wooed it.

In the training and preparation of the Methodist preacher of a generation or two ago, the exhorter's office played an important part. Very few of the fathers but passed through it on the way to a full commission. Dr. Barbee was licensed to exhort in June, 1852, and at once became diligent to exercise his gifts. No detailed account has been preserved of this lay preaching, but it was done amongst his friends and kinspeople. They heard with delight, but with no sense of astonishment, the earnest and well-directed exhortations of him whose manner of life they had known from the beginning. The fervor, naturalness, and success of his appeals to former pupils and other young associates were the expected. The licensing came at the beginning of the school vacation and also at the height of the circuit "revivals"—

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those old-time Methodist feasts of tabernacles, the redolence of which pervades our Church traditions. From June until harvest the people gathered under booths and in rude tabernacles to worship God and to support the call of their ministers to the erring and the unsaved. It was a busy, happy summer to the young Apollos. His zeal grew, and with it his efficiency increased. The larger endowment was seen to settle upon him; the fashion and manner of the hidden man began to be revealed.

After the lapse of six months, so certain was the belief of his elders that he was called of God to preach that his exhorter's license was changed to that of a local preacher. This action was taken by Trinity Circuit, Tennessee Conference, the section of Alabama in which he lived being then in said Conference. His license was signed by the Rev. W. D. F. Sawrie, the presiding elder of the district, an apostolic and renowned man of the old times.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE ITINERANT PREACHER.

RESPONSIBILITIES crowd upon a willing and qualified life. The Methodist itinerancy emphasizes this. The certainty with which a Methodist preacher may be advanced, through all his courses, becomes at once his hope and his peril. He does not have to wait upon canonical precedents nor answer to conventional requirements, but is carried forward by the unique system of which he becomes a part. If he justifies his promotion, the system profits; if not, the system is discredited and must deal with the dereliction after the fact. The local preacher experience of Dr. Barbee was brief, covering but a few weeks. It is doubtful if during that time he so much as preached a single sermon. He refers in a letter written to his parents to having "preached for the first

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time" on Livingston Circuit, after his admission into the Conference. This is interpreted to mean that he had not before spoken in public, except as an exhorter.

In October, 1852, being then somewhat more than twenty years of age and having been duly recommended from Trinity Circuit, he was received on trial into the traveling connection at the session of the Tennessee Conference held at Pulaski, Tenn. The visit to Conference distinctly widened his horizon and sympathies. The journey, made on horseback, was the longest of his life up to that date. Once at the Conference he betrayed the sign of a prophet. He was quick to read the manner and spirit of the fellowship which had fallen to him. It was a portion with giants—men who were not only hailed as great in their own provinces, but accepted as the chiefest leaders of the whole Church—its lawgivers and king makers. There were also men there renowned for eloquence and brilliant wit. They

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were a goodly company, and not a few. Let one search the chronicles of the men of Jerusalem, and the names found therein will testify to the truth of the record here made. Amid the high talk and doings of these the mind and soul of the rustic acolyte expanded. The spirit of the host came upon him, and he was turned into another man, seven times more militant than his former self. But if the world had before grown for him more and more, it suddenly and wondrously widened anew when, at the close of the Conference sitting, he heard his name read out as junior preacher on the Livingston Circuit, far up on the Cumberland Plateau, in Middle Tennessee. The call seemed to come from the antipodes, and the missionary quality of it was absolute.

Back to his father's home rode the newly commissioned soldier to make preparation for his longer journey and to say farewells to friends and loved ones. A letter before the writer of these memoirs tells in simple and

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tender words of the leave-taking of the son and brother about whom the pride, as the love, of the humble home had come to cling. It was in the golden November of the year. About the farm and about the neighborhood mill, some miles removed, there was a bustle incident to the linting season—the ginning and packing of the year's yield of cotton. A sense of sadness, almost of reproach, came over the son and brother as he thought of the extra labor that must come upon the father and the other sons because of his absence from the ranks of the breadwinners. It is well for us that we cannot get away from the human sense, even in the act of obedience to a command divine. The Word itself was made flesh.

The boy who, through poverty and toil, to this hour of his manhood's test, had found rest at his mother's knee and a plentiful inspiration in her love, and who had rarely spent a night from under the roof that covered her, was going—*going away!* He had no hope of return-

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ing for at least a year. It is an old story, but none the less of nature and the simple heart. The letter referred to describes briefly the scene of that parting: "I well remember the time of his leaving home for his first appointment. His whole heart was melted. Our father and our brother Sim were at the mill, and to avoid a second struggle he took a bypath that led him around the mill. He was thus not subjected to the ordeal of another parting." Who even of those grown old in years, and who hear the voices of their youth only as echoes, can revert to scenes like this in their own lives without having their "whole hearts melt" within them? Ten thousand scenes like that at the door of the humble Alabama home belong to the history that has made Methodism a power in the salvation of the world. It has had the world's best in its service, and, for the most part, has found that best in the homes of humbleness, where affection and honor have been the only certain heritage.



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The young itinerant left home riding a favorite horse called "Charley." This horse was probably his only possession of value except the few books stowed away in his ample saddlebags. It was characteristic of the man that he should have shown a great fondness for his horse. He watered, fed, and cared for "Charley" himself. "He would talk to him and fondle him," says the letter from which we quote, "until the horse seemed to understand every word his master said." The journey from Northwestern Alabama to Northern Middle Tennessee was, as a horseback experience, no small undertaking. The distance can be but little short of two hundred miles. It duly impressed the pilgrim both by its length and the pleasing variety of country through which it led. Wide valleys, flanking a great river, interminable lanes dividing vast plantations and grass and clover meadows in the lowlands of Tennessee marked the first stage. At last the glow and hue of the mountains invited up-

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ward. The curtains of autumn were hung from summit to valley. A solemnity which accorded well with the spirit of the traveler clothed the face of nature. He communed with himself as he went, and prepared himself for the beginning day of his mission.

So soon as the post of duty was reached a letter (that "first letter") was written and dispatched to the loved ones at home. An extract from this letter will show the soul of the man in his youth, his tenderness, the loyalty of his love, and the estimate which he had of his life work while he was yet no more than upon its threshold. It will also exhibit the stages of his journey from the door of his childhood home until he entered into "his own." "I will now give you," the letter proceeds, "a cursory history of myself since I left home. The first day my heart and eyes were full. . . . I went to Oakville. There, finding that I had left my spur at home, I related the story to Sister Lindsey, who, like a kind mother, without further

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ceremony, gave me her husband's spur. Thence I proceeded toward Decatur, ever and anon casting languid eyes back to my fond home and kind friends. But on my way I was led to this consideration: If God has called me to preach his word to a fallen world, I will dry my tears and soothe my troubled heart; and from that time forward I have been very cheerful, with some exceptions. . . . The following morning I proceeded to Decatur, where I met with Brother Gaines, and with whom I journeyed on my route to Huntsville. Dark overtaking us before we reached that point, we spent the night at old Brother Jamer's, about fifteen miles from the first appointment on Madison Circuit. The next morning, being Wednesday morning, we proceeded to Union Hill, where Brother Gaines preached. The next morning I parted with him. He went to his next appointment, and I went to Brother Driskill's, about fifteen miles distant. There I stayed, going to circuit preaching un-

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til Monday morning, when I left for Livingston Circuit, traveling by the way of Winchester, McMinnville, and Sparta, until Thursday, about two hours by sun, I put up with a Brother Pelham on my circuit. When I got here, I am happy to say for your comfort, I was received as a son, and the people of this house told me their home was the Methodist preacher's home, and such I have found it to be. I have now been here two days nearly, and tomorrow, being Sunday, I will try to preach for the *first time*. My colleague has not come yet, but I am looking for him to-night. . . . Receive my best love, and know when you read this that the best wishes of your son and your brother are with you. . . . Tell poor Allen, if he is yet alive, that I love him and want him to get religion."

As was to be expected, that *first sermon* turned out a success. Step by step the preacher won his way, the people seeing that he had received a message from his Master. A calm-

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ness of demeanor and a manifest earnestness characterized him from the beginning. The gospel of the time was surcharged with emotion. The appeal of the pulpit was nervous, dramatic, and often wildly hortatory. Its language was picturesque and fervid, but its interpretations were realistic and startling. These were the precedents he knew, but he followed instead an inner impulse. His words did not lack intensity nor directness, but he delivered them with what force he could upon the whole man, intellect and ethical sense as well as the emotions, and waited for results in the ripening of after convictions as well as in present feelings. Neither the memory nor the effects of that preaching have passed from the mountain community in which it was done. In the old-time Methodist homes it is still a topic of conversation, and the fruits of it are spoken of with confidence.

During this year he suffered from an attack of mountain fever. Tender and thoughtful

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was the care given by those simple people to their beloved young pastor. He was near to the gates of death, but faithful nursing and the care of a competent physician saved the life for a long time trembling in the balance. The physician declined to accept pay for his services. In speaking, in after years, of this kindness, the patient's eyes would fill with tears and his lips failed to express the gratitude he felt. Thus it was that the brotherhood of healers got a stronger hold upon his heart.

The session of the Conference which met in 1853 heard with approval the report of his work as a junior pastor, and rewarded faithfulness by making him pastor of the Frankfort Mission, in the Tuscumbia District, in Alabama. This work proved to be one of the hardest, and yet one of the most happily remembered, of his itinerant career. It brought him nearer to the paternal home, making possible an occasional visit thereto during the year. These visits were as frequent as his pastoral

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duties permitted. His home and his call held his heart in the thralldom of perfect love. His mother was a strong character and a devout Christian, and he idolized her. For his father, who was, as we have seen, a reticent, austere man, he had a reverent affection. The father was handsome as well as soldierly in appearance, and the son was said to resemble him in facial features. A member of the family relates that late in life, when he was at the summit of his greatness, he was detected looking earnestly at himself in the mirror and talking softly all the while, as to some one far away. Being affectionately prodded for the seeming vanity of the act, he replied with emotion: "Ah, I was looking at my father in that mirror, and talking to him." The grave and reverend man of threescore and ten had become a boy again, looking into the face of the sire, who, though forty years dead, was a living presence in his thoughts.

On one of the visits back home about this

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time he became ill of a cold on the road, and on reaching his father's house went immediately to bed. In a few moments his mother appeared with a basin of hot water and towels to bathe his feet. "No, mother," objected the son; "you cannot do that." "Now, Jeems," tenderly protested the mother, "you are still my little boy, and you will not deny me this pleasure." Like a dutiful son he submitted. Her pride in him was boundless.

From the authoritative letter already quoted in part the following is taken: "Livingston Circuit and Frankfort Mission, two of the hardest works he ever traveled, seemed to be among the brightest spots in his itinerant life. These works brought him into contact with the rougher elements of society and gave him an insight into the inner life of the crude and illiterate. His own life having been one of poverty, he was enabled to enter more completely into sympathy with them; and they gave to him their hearts, and he won them for



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Christ and the Church. His soul's delight was to listen to the mothers in Israel talk of battles fought and victories won.”\*

This year on the Frankfort Mission was the making of the preacher. So rapid were his strides forward as a man of power and ability in the pulpit that the attention of the entire Conference was attracted to him. His career was forecasted and spoken of with confidence by all. He had gone forth from his father's house like another Saul, the son of Kish; but he returned having found a crown and a kingdom.

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\*This letter, so valuable in the preparation of the earlier chapters of this memoir, was written by his favorite brother, Dr. John Barbee, of Texas.

## CHAPTER VI.

### FULLY LAUNCHED.

THERE is nothing so improbable and romantic as life. The daylight of reality dims the taper flame of fancy. What we are is far stranger than what, by taking thought, we would make ourselves. The thing we call destiny is only the intelligent disposition which life makes of itself; but the fruits of destiny are hidden until their season. Little did the lonely itinerant of twenty, who had as yet preached no sermon, dream, on passing that November day in 1852 through the opulent town of Decatur, that within two years he should be installed as pastor in its leading pulpit. But this thing came to pass.

At the session of the Tennessee Conference held at Florence, Ala., in October, 1854, he was, after having passed the clerical and liter-

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ary examinations, ordained an elder by Bishop Robert Paine. The solemn significance of this ordination grew upon him through all his after life. A strict anti-ritualist, he yet appraised at apostolic value the sacraments and ordinations of the New Testament. To him they were holy things, and to touch them with unauthorized hands was to commit sacrilege. He also esteemed the office through which ordinations canonically descend. He was as little a successionist as he was a liturgist, but he accounted the Methodist episcopacy an apostolic institution. His youth and his prime saw the years of its might when it rejoiced in the incumbency of giants. Also he was permitted to depart before it came to men, as a thing expedient, to lay unconsecrated hands upon a Churchly sacrament.

The appointments for the year assigned him, as already noticed, to the pastorate of Decatur Station. The town was commercially important, being situated on the Tennessee Riv-

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er and being then the terminus of the Nashville and Decatur Railroad. Its strategic value to Methodism was considerable, and this fact influenced the selection of a pastor. The vigorous physique, active intellect, and respectable attainments of the appointee, together with his spirituality and zeal, were duly measured in the preliminaries. He stood from his shoulders to his head taller than all the men of his years in the Conference. He had come to service in unconscious answer to a need of his time and Church. It was the era of overflowing wealth in the Old South. The plantation system had reached its maximum of development. The planters were beginning to seek homes in the cities and larger towns, leaving their country estates to the care of agents or overseers. A new social order was thus rapidly coming on, and one which, had it not been arrested by war, had resulted in the most unique situation ever attained in the history of civilization. Methodism was facing this rapidly

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coming situation, and was already directing its energies toward the growing centers of commerce and population. It had been the religion of the poor; it was now to become none the less the religion of the rich. It had faithfully preached the gospel to the slaves of the plantations, but at the same time had commanded the respect of the slaveholder and planter. It was peculiarly a pledge of order and faithful living in the land. Naturally and wisely it sought to strengthen its hold upon a growing and prophetic empire. It cherished hopes of great universities, colleges, and other endowed schools, the gifts and dedications of its sons both of wealth and poverty. It planned also the erection of great churches in the cities and other commanding centers of life. The architectural plans for these churches were exhibited and discussed in General Conferences as matters of more than passing moment.

Strong men with consecrated graces of mind and social character were needed for the pul-

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pits in these centers. It was no longer a matter of pioneering, but of building and making steadfast. The "Bark Log" school-teacher was early marked in his Conference for this work, and the history of his ministry through a period of fifty years showed how correctly the early prophecy had been read. He who had been but humbly born, and who had struggled amid disparaging limitations and lack of early training, became the accepted religious guide and teacher of the great and learned of the land.

After spending a year in the pastorate at Decatur, he was transferred to the charge of Tusculumbia Station, the chief appointment in the district in which he was born, and in which he had spent his childhood and youth. It was the most responsible charge he had received. To the congregation he was not wholly a stranger; some members of it had known his early history, and it is presumed that special request had been made for his appointment to the

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Church. That the arrangement was mutually agreeable to an unusual extent is proved by the sequel. It possessed the additional attraction of bringing him nearer than he had been before to his home and friends, to whom his success and growing distinction gave the most genuine joy. Not only was his useful life a source of pride to his brothers and sisters, but it reflected blessedness upon them and contributed in many ways to their comfort and progress. He educated several of his brothers, and became, in fact, another father to them. He treasured little keepsakes of them, among his papers being found letters that were written to him by favorite brothers half a century before, which he had put away as sacred treasures, doubly sacred to him after their deaths.

Tuscumbia was a place of social pretensions, and was also a center of education. The ministry of a native son pleased and impressed its people; and although the exigencies of the itinerancy removed him at the end of the year,

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when conditions changed the demand for his return was heeded, when he completed a full-term pastorate of two years. Again for three years, during the wasting reign of war, he found a home and received a welcome among these high-souled people. Naturally this place remained in memory his home of homes, and a visit to it was counted a return to the house of affection.

In October, 1856, the Conference sitting in Huntsville, Ala., he was made an elder by the imposition of the hands of Bishop James O. Andrew, of whom he always spoke as "the dear old Bishop." Thus without delay, and strictly within the required four years of study, he accomplished his probation and entered into acknowledged parity with the men of the most august body in Methodism. From this Conference he was again ordered to service within the limits of Tennessee, his appointment being Spring Hill Station, Columbia District, also a center of Methodist culture and refinement.



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He was now slightly more than four and twenty years of age, and had redeemed in every point his earlier promise and was fully launched upon the useful career he was to lead as a minister of Jesus Christ. While yet an undergraduate he had filled two important stations, and at the end of his fourth year took that rank in his Conference which he held with a steady advance until he reached and filled for four years the first pulpit in Methodism. It is seldom that even the Methodist itinerancy, so prolific of such contradictions of conditions, has paralleled this steady march toward distinction and success. The Spring Hill appointment proved the halfway house to the still more important charge of McMinnville Station, upon which he entered the following year (1857), he being then but twenty-five years of age. In proceeding to his charge in the prosperous mountain city, he traversed much of the route which he had followed in going to his first circuit in 1852. But how different



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his emotions! How wider his horizon! Then he was all untried in the larger sphere, and was, in spite of his ardent faith, beset by misgivings and inwardly awed by trepidations. He asked himself in seriousness if he could meet the exigencies of his new high calling. Did he have the equipment for his task? Had he not rushed into a service which an angel had feared to undertake? All his powers remained to be tested. The brotherhood with which he had sought to cast his lot had accepted him only on "trial." There had been failures before; what right had he to expect better than the worst, since he had not proved the armor which he had permitted others to fit upon him? But now all was changed; he rejoiced. His own mettle had been fully tested while he had put to proof his virgin armor. He had returned from fields not a few, and from none had he come empty-handed. Manhood, too, was letting fall the last radiant folds of its mantle about him. Over that mountain capital

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whither he journeyed to labor was soon to rise for him, though he knew it not, the star of a tender and enthralling sentiment—one destined to draw out the chivalry and devotion of all his after life.

McMinnville, like other pastorates served by him, was a seat of education, and in that the man and the parish found their complement. Free from the inadaptabilities of the priest, with dignified but easy manners, exhibiting a mind freshly stored and serving in every office with humanlike sympathy, he won without studied effort and held what he won to the end. It was while serving this pastorate that he first met Margaret Rankin, a young and beautiful girl who was receiving her education in the young ladies' boarding school kept in the place. She was converted under his ministry, and joined the Church during his pastorate. A tender passion sprang up in the manly young heart for this fair girl, but it remained unconfessed for years. The one beloved had

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not finished her school course when the lover was called to a distant field. Ten years later, after the drama of war had reddened and gloomed the land, their lives were united. How fitting and pleasing the fact that he should have been permitted, in so young a manhood, to lead to Christ the woman who was afterwards to become his wife!

The following year (1858) he was again recalled to his native soil and became pastor of the important pastorate of Florence Station; but at the end of the year was assigned a second time, as already noticed, to Tuscumbia Station, where he remained during the years 1860 and 1861. There was little of variety in these changing pastorates. They were in much the same class as to ecclesiastical importance. They called for the same round of pastoral duties, the yearly revival, the prayer and class meetings, and the care of the people of color—the slave contingent—which, under the plan of the Methodism of the Old South,

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was made a part of the pastoral office. The life which he led was one of peace and devotion to duty. No disturbing ambition invaded his thought. He had found his life, and walked in it; he gave himself wholly to the ministry. But as his pastorate at Tuscumbia drew toward its close (in 1861) the life of the nation began to manifest throes and agonies of a fateful strife; and province, shire, and village answered the augury. An immanence of dread depressed the universal thought. The shadow of a sword fell across the land.

## CHAPTER VII.

### IN THE DAYS OF WAR.

WE are now come fully into the shadow of that tragic event which changed the currents of our national life, and which became, in one of its sequences, vitally related to the present story. In the spring of 1861 the War between the States was in sight. Blood had already been sprinkled upon the altar of American courage, and forevisions of the coming Armageddon distracted the public mind and disturbed the religious life of the people. The commonwealth of Tennessee, being on the border of the newly proclaimed Confederacy, was especially distressed by the rapidly forming conditions. From the mountain sections of its eastern border to the lowlands of the west, describing the widest divergence of political doctrines, it was aflame with excitement. On



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account of local partisanship existing in some quarters of the State, the contention had developed into a civil strife upon the soil. Two armies, hostile the one to the other, were forming out of the same population. The flower of its manhood was being gleaned away, while the militant sacrifices otherwise being made by its people revealed the foundations. There was a balancing of hope and fear, as the portents were read, which perhaps proved more destructive of religious sentiment in the general thought than did the bitter aftermath which came in its time.

At the height of these continent-shaking conditions, and just before the sword was drawn in the full abandonment of war, the Tennessee Conference met in Athens, Ala., under the presidency of Bishop John Early. From this sitting our young itinerant was a third time assigned to service within the territory of Tennessee. This appointment carried him to the capital city as pastor of Mulberry Street and

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Claiborne Chapel. It was a distinctly upward step, but it was also a step into increased responsibility and to the handling of problems intensified by the fiery visitation which was falling upon the land. The purpose of the appointment seems to have been the building up of a great central city mission. This indicated that a man of exceptional industry and peculiar gifts should be selected for the pastorate. The appointing power made its selection accordingly. The writer is unable to identify this parish among the half-dozen or more charges now existing in South Nashville. Probably several of the more modern Churches sprang from it, the present Carroll Street congregation being in all likelihood the survival of the main stem. The charge was in what was then the most popular, as it was the most populous, part of the capital. The drift of the greater modern city has been away from the seats and thoroughfares of the south side, but there remain plentiful evidences in that section of the wealth

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and polite life that once dominated it and made its name a pride in all the land.

Nashville had even then become the official center of the powerful and growing Methodist Connection. This preëminence had been contended for by other cities of the Southern border in the years in which the separated Methodism of the South was settling the lines of its empire; but competition had long been given over, and the position of the city on the Cumberland had been fully conceded. The Church's publishing interests—then, as now, the largest in the Southern half of the country—had been concentrated there. The chief connectional functions of the denomination were begun and executed there. Bishop Joshua Soule, the Senior General Superintendent of the Church, had his official residence there. In addition to the body of strong men who administered connectional affairs, there were distinguished and eloquent representatives of the Church in local pulpits. Dr. A. L. P.

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Green, a renowned preacher of the period, was at this time presiding elder of the district. Constant fellowship with this man was an education in dignity of thought and character. Even then, because of its educational institutions and its circles of brilliant men in every calling of life, the city boasted the title, "Athens of the South." It had been the home of two Presidents of the republic, and was an acknowledged seat of power.

A pastorate in Nashville at this period might well have been coveted by any young preacher of the Conference; and, as we have seen, the assignment in this case was a mark of preferment. Although the times were so sadly out of joint, the appointee went to his work in a characteristic way, and remained until estopped by the chaos of war. His manner of preaching at this time is described as being most original and as having a quality which long remained with his hearers, provoking thought and action in them many days afterward. In-

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deed, this may be described as one of the characteristics of his preaching through life. It fertilized the minds of his congregations, so that after a long pastorate they were found thinking his thought, loving with his love the true, and hating with his hate the evil. This, his first city pastorate, was, though a brief one, of immense value to him in giving a certain turn and enlargement to his thought. He profited by contact with men distinguished in the affairs of Church and State. He began to put his finger upon the pulse of general life in a way he had not done before, and which, in fact, he had had no opportunity to do before.

In his middle and later life Dr. Barbee exhibited a sense of the most genuine and refreshing humor, which had not been noticeable in his younger years. It is believed that this sunny appanage began to accrue to him about this time. "He knew a good thing when he saw it," writes one who knew him best. He gave a zestful welcome to every

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good story, and was himself a master in the art of story-telling, but always exercised the gift in exclusive circles. In public he seldom indulged in humor, though one might often see where the *jeu d'esprit* was barely excluded even in his strong and serious discourses. It is interesting to reflect that this quality of his mind should have been so long in coming, and that it should have had its most marked development in a time made somber by war and civil strife. This is unusual, but not exceptional. His life exhibited the unusual at every point. Too hardly did his chrysalis spirit escape the bindings of its early conditions to drift at once into lighter airs and lenient moods. Its first tracks were along the heights where the sunshine was broad and the demand for the full wing was complete. A gracious humanlikeness began later to mingle with the severer habitudes of his earlier years. It is suggested that about this time he made Burns, the Scotch poet, his standard in such matters.

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It is certain that, next to Shakespeare, Burns influenced his modes of expression. Thus he grew by the contact of the outer man and also through the meditations and communings of the inner man. This is the tree planted by the rivers of waters.

During this year he especially profited from being so near the venerable Bishop Soule, who, as it seems, was sometimes an auditor at his preaching. This great prelate, the author of the Constitution of Episcopal Methodism, impressed him as none other man ever did or could. The mold and manner of their two natures were alike. Fixed motives and devotion to ideals governed each absolutely. From the aged Bishop the young pastor not only imbibed that which strengthened his spiritual experience, but he also received high views of Church polity and administrations, which views, as we have seen, he held to the end of his life. His matured thoughts on this subject were embodied in a paper printed in the

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*Pacific Methodist Advocate* in 1891, under the caption, "Polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." It was the voice of a stalwart Methodism, a Methodism that had its exemplification in the past.

By the end of this year the full force of the war had been delivered upon the State of Tennessee, which, next to Virginia, had been marked as the chief battle ground of the strife. Church work and social life were completely disorganized in all the regions affected by the invading and repelling armies. The capital of Tennessee was become the pivot of a revolving wheel of fire. Many ministers left their pulpits for service in camp and field; but, though the spirit of patriotism was strong in the breast of the ardent young Alabamian, he found it difficult to subordinate his higher commission. When the war broke out, the Confederate States Secretary of War Walker, of Alabama, who had known him, sent him an appointment as chaplain and assigned him to service in a



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regiment organized at Montgomery. This duty he accepted, but after a few weeks of service found a legitimate excuse for resigning and returned to his wonted walk, except that he rendered voluntary service as chaplain in camps where he could.

The more southward-lying territory of the Church had not suffered so much as that in Tennessee, though it was beginning to feel the constant drain of war. In October, 1862, so much of the Tennessee Conference as could be got together met in Cornersville, Tenn., under the presidency of the Rev. Dr. John B. McFerrin. The appointments appear to have been the result of what, in later Methodist parlance, has been termed a "kitchen cabinet;" they were more by consent than authority, but loyal men accepted their mutual pledges as they did the word of command. Partly of choice, as it would seem, and partly of arrangement, the ex-"Bark Log" schoolmaster turned his face southward to minister again amongst

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his own kith and kin. In November, 1862, he entered upon his third pastorate at Tuscumbia. This pastorate continued nominally until 1865, the Tennessee Conference, on account of the stress of war and the military occupation of its territory, holding no sessions during the years 1863 and 1864.

A crisis now came, a condition whose arguments overbore the purpose of the pastor to remain out of the military. The desperate cause of the Confederacy at last leveled the ranks and orders of life in the demands which it made upon its citizens. Religious and political obligations seemed to blend into one sentiment which inevitably shaped itself into a sword blade. The issue was not to be evaded. The itinerant of thirty became a belligerent. His patriotism flamed out. Secretary of War Walker now issued to him a colonel's authority to raise a regiment, and this he accepted, raising the levy out of his pastorate at Tuscumbia, his former pastorate at Decatur, and

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out of the region of his nativity; but before the regiment was mustered into service he was stricken with inflammatory rheumatism and lay sick in Decatur for months, going to the verge of the grave. This sickness occurred at the home of his mentor, the Rev. Finch P. Scruggs, of whom it is related that he went to the room of the patient and said for him a farewell prayer, so certain was he that the end had come. This providence, and this alone, prevented the pastor from becoming the colonel on the field of military service. Recovering, he resumed his work as a minister and slowly settled down in the conviction that he should serve only under the commission given him by his Captain, Christ.

During the time that the Conference organization was in a state of enforced suspension the general work was directed chiefly by the presiding elders. In many places congregational usages obtained temporarily. In some quarters there were discipline and administra-

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tion; in some there was none. Scores of churches were closed and their congregations scattered. There was little itinerating and few exchanges between districts until the conditions of war had been modified or had passed away altogether. The Senior Bishop, whose residence was within the territory of the Conference, gave what direction and aid he could, but for the most part the men of Israel were a law unto themselves. The cohesion of the self-directed parts and the coherency of the results achieved indicate the discipline and the initiative of the Methodist itinerancy. The secret of the great success of this itinerancy has been in its power to adapt itself to conditions. When the time comes that any one of its elements, high or low, fails to respond to settled conditions, then it must suffer an early if not instant abridgment of usefulness. It is an instrument, and not an immutable agent; a high expedient, and not an inflexible necessity.

It was during the period described above,

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the city of Nashville having fallen into the hands of the Federal Army, that the United States government took forcible possession of the Church's Publishing House. The House at this time was amply furnished with expensive type, printing presses, bindery and foundry appliances, and was stored with quantities of printers' and publishers' materials. This use continued until long after the cessation of hostilities, and finally degenerated into a vandal-like abuse. The stocks of material were used up in printing army proclamations and reports; the expensive machinery was either destroyed or so abused as to render it of little value. Finally the gutted storehouses were turned into hay barns and stables for the horses of the military. The use of this House was undoubtedly an exigency of war, and was allowable on the understanding that the Church, a nonbelligerent body, was to be duly remunerated by the government on the successful termination of its war. But the abuse

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of the Church's property went beyond what was either right or proper, and constituted that unconditional element in the Church's claim which was so long and persistently urged by its agents. So much is said concerning this matter here because it is historically related to these memoirs, and also as a preparation for the fuller review of the Church's claim which is to come in its chronological place.

The long, irregular pastorate at Tuscumbia, although it covered the years of the land's distress, was not without much spiritual fruit. The last year, which closed in October, 1865, witnessed a substantial growth in the membership of the Church. The cup of bitter woes which the people of the whole land were called upon to drink turned their thoughts toward God and the consolations of religion. In all the South, during that and the years succeeding, there was a great stretching forth of hands toward the Invisible, and thus were sweetened at last the griefs that came of war.

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During the war period Dr. Barbee was in and out of his father's home, spending weeks at a time there, and often preaching in the neighborhood where he had grown up from boyhood. During this period (but the exact date of it cannot be fixed), at a camp ground below Tuscumbia, he held a notable meeting, in which several hundred persons were converted. He often spoke of this meeting as a remarkable manifestation of the power of God in the conversion of men. The meeting continued for weeks, and was reluctantly brought to a close. It created an impression that has lingered in the community for half a century.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE CROWN OF MANHOOD.

A FEW days before the surrender at Appomattox the Tuscumbia pastor, in quiet musings, as was his habit on such occasions, celebrated his thirty-third birthday, which is conventionally allowed to mark the perfect age of man. The crown and strength of manhood had thus come to him at that juncture in his history when strength and self-mastery were most needed. He had attained the favor of destiny just when the tokens were darkest for his country. But he had his best to give when his country needed most to receive. The evangel which was to bring peace and healing to a people "meted out and trodden down" called for manhood behind it. The healing was to come of the divine love joined to a patient and tireless human kindness. Virile courage and unwavering faith were also needed to side



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with mercy. The faint-hearted might well turn back. But there was not wanting courage and devotion for that day, and foremost among the faithful was found him of whom these words of tribute are written.

After an interregnum of two full years the Tennessee Conference met, in October, 1865, in the town of Edgefield, now that populous section of the capital city known as East Nashville. The Kentucky Boanerges, Bishop Hubbard H. Kavanaugh, presided and stirred with mighty eloquence the hearts of the reorganized veterans. Plans for the rehabilitation of Zion were laid, and at the word of command the men in commission moved to their places in the watch towers round about. The appointments of that year carry this reading—viz.: “Florence Station, James D. Barbee.” This was a long-deferred year in his life. Its bright particular summer time brought him the realization of his dreams of earthly love. On July 18 of this year he married Miss Margaret Ran-

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kin at the home of her sister, Mrs. George J. Stubblefield, in the city of Nashville, Dr. Robert A. Young, the pastor of Tulip Street Church, officiating. This happy event was the consummation of a long and tenderly cherished sentiment. We have seen how the lovers first met during his pastorate in McMinnville, nearly ten years before. The young pastor of twenty-five carried away from his mountain charge the memory of a frail and beautiful girl whom far-away labors and the long interval of war prevented him from seeing. When the night was past and the sun of peace again shone, the image of the one woman being still in his heart, he sought her and laid his life at her feet. A true love match, it was followed by a life of singular devotion between man and wife. For nearly forty years they walked together with the love of their bridal vows fresh on their lips and quenchless in their hearts.

I have been unable to obtain details of the

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history of that year's pastoral work. It was necessarily largely devoted to the reorganization and reinspiring of the congregation. The political and social demoralization following the war was at its height. Old and proud communities like Florence were especially affected by the changed social order. The task of spiritual ministry to such communities was delicate and difficult. How well the task was performed in this case may be judged from the exhibit made in the statistical section of that year's journal. The figures show a large increase in the membership, which is the accepted token of an industrious pastorate and a fruitful ministry. A contemporary testifies to the esteem in which the man and his message were held by his people in those days.

The report of the labors of this year was laid before the Conference in annual session at Huntsville, Ala. Bishop H. N. McTyeire, elected at the memorable General Conference held in May of the same year (1866), presided.

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The prowess of this man was already known, and there was expectancy and attention wherever he went. His manner was dignified, and his words were measured and sage. Without high-churchly accessories he awed and impressed assemblies, and without the blandishments of oratory he held and instructed vast audiences. He was set for great actions and the execution of great enterprises in Methodism. Naturally enough, from the first the young pastor regarded with special admiration the young bishop. Next indeed to Bishop Soule, he counted him the greatest spirit he had ever known. In time they came to be most intimate friends, and were in especially confidential relations during the last years of the bishop's life. Near the same age, having like temperaments and like intense convictions, it was most natural that when accident and station brought them together they should have gravitated into a particular intimacy. Documents before me show that the bishop re-

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posed in Dr. Barbee a perfect confidence and made him his counselor in many important matters. Often was the latter heard to say in great exigencies and troublous times of the Church: "O that Bishop McTyeire were alive!" A great name is a solace to the hearts of the great.

The favorable impression which the pastor received of the bishop at this Huntsville Conference was mutual; and when the appointments were read, the former found himself assigned to Tulip Street Church, in the Edgefield section of the capital of Tennessee, then, as now, one of the important Churches of Methodism. His immediate predecessor in this charge was the Rev. Robert A. Young, D.D., a true and long-trusted friend. For presiding elder he again had Dr. A. L. P. Green, who also had long been an ardent and admiring friend. His situation was now ideal. In the first year of happy wedded life, sumptuously domiciled, in the meridian light of manhood,

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and the leader of a great congregation, there seemed little left for the itinerant heart to wish. It was a year of marked growth in his powers and of his qualifications for the pulpit. Around him throbbed the new life of the land awaking from the nightmare of war. The old order had passed out by way of the sword; the new order was coming in by the way of masterful and impassioned speech. There was on hand a warfare truly, one being fought in the invisible air that surrounded every life; but it was of the machinations of infinite meanness supported by the hordes of ignorance on one side, and of the spirit of winnowed and sifted manhood on the other. Political *ladrones* swarmed over the land and infested its official places. But the land showed the temper of its citizenry, as well as found its salvation and reënduement, in its strenuous method of resistance. The capital of Tennessee became the center of this resistance, and was amongst the earliest to gain a mastery in the

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contest. In that contest, as in the achievement of victory, it discovered its own life. The dream of a great commercial city began to possess its people, and the dream passed into an instant activity. Railroad lines were extended, the foundations of great educational enterprises were laid, metropolitan churches were planned, and with the new realizations came a new and quickened spirit of thought.

Synchronously with the secular renaissance came a change, symptomatic at first, in religious sentiment and conformity. The General Conference had, in 1866, formally excised some of the old tests of membership in the Church. It had, on the other hand, run a line of strict disciplinary interpretation across the worldly bent of the age. Radical administration of discipline was expected, even exacted, of pastors. A line of cleavage on the ethics of conduct appeared in the body of almost every congregation. The situation of the pastor became delicate, often impossible. A novice

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was sure to blunder, and novices there were without number. A full share of these perplexities fell upon the hands of the pastor of Tulip Street Church in that time of early adjustments. They could not, in any case, have been escaped, and that pastor was not the one to seek an escape. But he was a conservative of an individual school. He upheld canons and authoritative traditions, but he patronized liberty in her legitimate seats. In pleasing his own conscience he pleased not all, but the many he "pleased for their good unto edification."

The statistical tables for this year show a large increase in the membership of the Church, and the ministry of the year is still cherished in the memory of many of the older members of that dignified congregation. There was a strong and all but unanimous request sent to the cabinet for his return the next year, but for reasons satisfactory to both himself and the appointing power he was transferred to the pastorate of Elm Street Church, in the



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same section of the city in which his labors had been given in 1861. This appointment was made by Bishop Paine at the session of the Conference held in Clarksville in October, 1867.

Elm Street, with its stately old-time edifice, has not greatly changed since that pastorate of nearly forty years ago. It is now, and was then, the chief congregation of the south side. It has had a long line of distinguished pastors, and has been literally and spiritually as "a city set upon a hill." It is a home of old-time fervency and piety, consistent in its devotion to Methodist discipline and ideals. It has yielded to no inroads of worldliness and fostered no vagaries of doctrine or experience. Its people are the survival of the older and simpler-mannered gentry of the past. The atmosphere of this pastorate was peculiarly grateful to the new pastor.

The staid and settled character of the congregation and the finished growth of the old

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city about it afforded little opportunity for expansion. The work was that of building up, of sowing in patience the seeds of the truest spiritual life in experience, thought, and action. In all the work of evangelism there is none more important than that of dealing with the matured stages of great congregations. It is the chance of the perfecting of the saints. Conventionally speaking, it is easy to bring the world up to a certain stage of enlightenment and spiritual response. The stage beyond that calls for "fastings and prayers," for wrestlings and for "strong cryings" in the secret life of the man who is to lead in the upward way. The first year of this pastorate, reported upon at the session of the Conference held in Shelbyville in October, 1868, Bishop McTyeire again presiding, showed but fairly in the statistical tables. But the plowing had been deep and the sowing diligent, and, the sower being returned for a second year, the harvest began early to fall to his hand. The statistics for

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1868-69 show a good growth in the Church throughout.

In October, 1869, the Conference met in Murfreesboro under the presidency of Bishop Robert Paine. A new experience was in store for the pastor of Elm Street, who had uniformly filled only station pulpits since the second year of his itinerant service. The penetrating judgment of the presiding bishop selected him for district work, and the appointments of that year show him as having charge of the Huntsville District. This proved the beginning of a long experience in the sub-episcopacy, an office in the active discharge of which he was to close his earthly career.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE PRESIDING ELDER.

THE presiding eldership found in James D. Barbee a man adapted to it in a way out of the ordinary. He brought to it exceptional pulpit ability, zeal, industry, and great brotherly kindness. But of those accessories of political shrewdness and adroitness, sometimes called by the milder name of tact, and which are occasionally associated with this office, he had none. An Israelite indeed, his guilelessness never revealed itself more certainly than in the presiding eldership. A leader of men he was not, if a leader of men be understood to be one who draws men after him through fear of his displeasure or promise of his patronage. Of such primacy he knew nothing, and would as soon have affronted a man as patronize him. But a leader he was of such as, in all times and places, are of a gentle fashion of

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soul and follow men for their worth and the love they have to give. Thousands there were who followed him thus, with hearts both leal and unveiled, to the end. He did not know men; he was unpracticed in the art of finding out. He discovered men—as he left himself to be discovered—in the open light of frank and brotherly dealings. Until committed at that tribunal no man was judged by him; but measurement being taken there, he had the precedent of justice. This was the equipment with which he took up the trust of his larger office in the ministry. His preachers loved him, trusted him, and never once found their confidence abused.

In November, 1869, he entered upon the administration of the affairs of the Huntsville (Ala.) District. It will be remembered that in 1852, as an unsophisticated boy preacher, with eyes wet from weeping and a heart heavy with homesickness, he rode athwart this same district on his way to his first appointment, far

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away in the highlands of Northern Tennessee. Seventeen years had passed! Could he think himself the same man? In many things he was changed, greatly changed; but in one thing he was unchanged. That simple, childlike heart was in the bosom of the man what it had been in the bosom of the boy. Nature, that made him, made him well and set a defense about that part of him which she designed to keep for her own.

A pathetic touch was given the laborious work of this year on a wide-extended district. The beloved wife, frail from girlhood, began to fail in strength as domestic and maternal cares multiplied upon her hands. The prophecy of future invalidism was plainly read by both husband and wife, but the chivalry of manly love and the devotion of wifely faith sustained them as they went on in the labors of their Lord. In the long journeys necessary to cover his extended field he was often many days and even weeks absent from home. Dur-

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ing these seasons the burden of the home was on the wife, but her patience and loyalty were equal to the need. She watched and waited while he fulfilled the will of Him of whom he was sent.

The General Conference of 1870 authorized the organization of the North Alabama Conference and the conformation of its northern boundary to the Tennessee State line. This delimitation materially subtracted from the territory of the Tennessee Conference, practically eliminating the Huntsville District, only a small part of it being within the State of Tennessee. The presiding elder and his preachers were in a strait betwixt two. Their affections were divided between the two segments; so the bishop gave them the choice of service in either Conference. The preachers divided, some going to one, some to the other body. The presiding elder, for personal and domestic reasons, chose to remain in the Tennessee Conference. Bishop McTyeire strong-

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ly advised against this choice, his sentiments of loyalty to Alabama being at that time very strong, and his interest in the particular transfer being always genuine. But Bishop Doggett, the President of the Conference, seemed to lean to the decision in favor of Tennessee, and so it was made permanent. For many years before his death Dr. Barbee believed that he had made a mistake in deciding as he did. His career in the other Conference would no doubt have been less conspicuous, but it would in all likelihood have been free from many of those stormy and bitter experiences which came to him on his "fortune's crowning slope." But who knows? His faith was made strong and his experience was enriched by what he suffered. Only the Future can read out to us the riddles of our little lives.

With the delimitation of their former boundary, the Tennessee Conference authorities formed a new province out of the fragments of those dismembered. This new allotment was



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called the Fayetteville District, and to it was appointed the retiring presiding elder of the Huntsville District. His first experience in the cabinet showed the dominant quality in him as a leader responsible for others. That quality was a Christly altruism. He thought first of the preachers under him. Not only did he encourage them in the field, but he supported and protected them in the cabinet and elsewhere. When he was presiding elder of the Nashville District, it was discovered that he made a habit of giving the elder's pro rata of missionary appropriations for the weaker charges to the preachers filling those charges. This, it has been ascertained, was his habit on all the districts served by him from the beginning. On one occasion a preacher was sent into his district in a condition of most distressing impecuniosity. His family was large, and the distance he was required to move was great. The case looked hopeless until the presiding elder took from his purse the money re-

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served to defray his own traveling expenses and put it into the hands of his penniless brother, trusting to another sacrifice to provide for his own needs. It was a principle with him as a presiding elder never to “unload” a man on the hands of another elder. If he could not himself conscientiously employ the man, he courageously put the responsibility upon the Conference. Furthermore, he set it as a rule in his administration not to send a man from his district except to better his fortune. It is believed that these policies are worthy of study and use in the most general way to-day.

The term of service given to the Fayetteville District covered three full years. The statistics show a steady increase during that time in all the interests of the Church. The membership of the district grew materially, and the grace of liberality extended amongst the people. Every Quarterly Conference was made the occasion of a particular appeal to the supremest motives of the people of God.

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High standards were set up for their thinking, speaking, and doing. The sin of selfishness and the beauty of righteousness were the strong antitheses of the gospel they heard on these occasions, then made so much more of than now. A powerful sermon on stewardship, some points of which will be studied in a future chapter, had its genesis in the strong official utterances made in the course of the ministry of these early presiding elder days.

A humanlikeness, to which reference has already been made, also entered into these district ministries. The presiding elder was a social benediction to the preachers, and especially to the younger ones. He remembered the days of his own entering in, and was swift to fly to the help of the life set in the breach. It was a noticeable fact that he drew young men to him. As Book Agent, at the Conferences, his table could be seen at almost any hour surrounded by the younger men of the body, whom he held in cheerful, chatty con-

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verse. On the district he was a stay and a fatherly counselor to the undergraduates. These he won by reason of the spell that went out of his great and simple heart, and inspired by the stately order of his thought and speech. Where he went he carried sunshine and the contagion of the better wish. There was never a word of cant on his lips, but the intensest moments of his life were those given to prayer. He was not without foibles, not without human faults, and the overexact often brought against him the charge of lacking in the sense of other-worldliness. But he was not unmindful of his mission when he smiled through tears repressed and spoke the care-dispelling jest out of lips that might otherwise have moaned in secret sorrow. What might have been austerity softened itself into a pleasant raillery or a challenging pun. But in the pulpit, in the sick room, and at the altar of the home was seen the convergence of every great and manifest impulse of his nature. Thus as

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a presiding elder he moved about amongst his preachers and their people "an example of believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

A good story which is told concerning his simple habits and great kindness of heart belongs to the period of his service on this district. His wife had made him a study gown of some inexpensive material, the whole cost of which probably did not exceed two shillings. Weary from long rides, necessary to cover distant parts of his district, and forced to husband his moments when at home, he sometimes received his friends, and especially his preachers, attired in this easy study gown. It chanced that an elderly brother, pastor of one of the charges of the district, coming into the presiding elder's home, found him arrayed in this habit and mistook the material of which it was made for some luxurious fabric far too costly for a saint to don. He immediately made report of it; and when the "quarterage"

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was being apportioned he objected to any portion of it being paid to a presiding elder who could afford such luxuries as the aforesaid study gown. When the presiding elder heard of it, though he was in sore need of money, he quietly laid his own allowance with that of the carping brother and bade the officials pay it all into his hands. Moreover, when the act of criticism was afterwards condemned, he made an apology for the offender. It was impossible for him to do a small thing.

Satisfactory as was his work in the presiding eldership, there was an ever-insistent demand for his services in one or the other of the prominent stations of the Conference, and it was only episcopal prerogative that held him three years on the Fayetteville District. In 1873 the Conference met at Franklin, under the presidency of Bishop McTyeire. At this Conference he was assigned to the important charge of Murfreesboro Station, where he completed a memorable pastorate of four years.

## CHAPTER X.

### FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.

THE pulpit is a throne of power, and the man who accedes to it by divine right and call, and who brings to it an honest preparation, ranks princeliest in the earth. The world conceded this of old, and has uncovered its head and abated its heraldries in the presence of the men worthy of their divine commission. The ideal of churchly greatness is a man sprung from the people, gifted and fitted in mind, untitled of choice, given in heart to the evangel, and whose business and ambition begin and end in the pulpit. It is not chance, but deliberate purpose, that makes such men. From St. Paul and John Chrysostom to Charles H. Spurgeon the rule has held. But the ideal disparages a vast confraternity, and a comparison leaves one dizzy and helpless, all but hopeless. When wisdom comes too late,

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there is yet wisdom in it by which another might profit if only he comes in the stead of the wise who has learned too late. Preaching was a passion with Dr. Barbee, and the vantage of the pulpit clearly offered him the path of access to men. He is known to have regretted that he ever allowed himself to be deflected into even ecclesiastical temporalities. His return to the pastorate, after a long connectional official service, brought back to him something of the joy and quiet exultation of his former pulpit days.

In October, 1873, as already noted, he entered upon what proved a long pastorate at Murfreesboro. The congregation was one to bring out his best, and the bonds of affection between pastor and people grew stronger each year. During these years the invalidism of his wife was constant, but the burdened heart returned its flower and its fruit in their season. There were young and tender children in his home. His salary made no great luxury pos-



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sible, so he rendered not only paternal devotion to his own, but maternal service also where there was lack through the suffering of the wife and mother. From such domestic concerns he often walked with an uplifting message directly into the pulpit, or went forth into the homes of his people with a buoyant faith to share their sorrows and divide with them the burdens of their days. One who knew him well about this period of his life says in a letter of reminiscences: "His care for his delicate wife was as tender as if she had been an infant. All that love could suggest or diligence provide was his limit. His love for his children was sublime. His prayer for them was: 'O Lord, give my children salvation at any cost.' The utmost of his ability to do for them was his measure."

The ministry of these four years is represented by no unusual figures in the tabular statements of the Conference journal, but the estimate of its abiding influence became, and

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is still, proverbial in the "Old Jerusalem Conference." Hon. Horace E. Palmer, a well-known attorney of Murfreesboro, in the course of a letter to this writer, says: "The work which he did here was lasting and very valuable. As you know, he was a great thinker, and he did much as the pastor of this Church in impressing his great views upon the members of the Church and the community at large. For many years after he left us the people frequently referred to his views upon many subjects, and to many sermons which he preached upon special subjects."

In 1877 the Conference again met in Edgefield, under the presidency of Bishop David S. Doggett. Bishop Doggett, a Virginian of the old type, was an administrator who considered the itinerancy from the standpoint of organization. The presiding eldership seems to have been in his conception the integer of chief importance. He reasoned that the most successful and the best-equipped men

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should be assigned to this post. A station preacher of the first rank was therefore the man to be made a pastor of pastors, a preacher to preachers, which office the presiding eldership is when rightly interpreted. In his draft for the year he assigned Dr. Barbee to the presiding eldership of the Columbia District. The region included within this district is one of extraordinary wealth. It is the heart of the clover and blue grass section of the State, and of what has later been known as the phosphate fields. In it were the homes of many of the oldest and richest families of Tennessee. Baronial estates with sumptuous houses gave an air of extraordinary dignity to the countryside crossed in every direction by macadamized highways and driving pikes. It suffered much from war, being the scene of the last and bitterest campaign of the Army of Tennessee; but it was earliest to recover, possessing exceptional resources of soil. Its people matched its soil, and were a recognized type

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in themselves even in a commonwealth boasting the high descents and traditions of its people as a whole. Methodism was not the dominant influence in some of its important communities, but it had a strong and growing hold in every quarter, and has kept the pace of recent years.

Dr. Barbee entered upon this new charge with a ripe and varied experience, coupled with a zeal that had kept its dew. The routine of the presiding eldership was now as natural to him as the rounds of the pastorate. He presided in Quarterly and District Conferences with quiet dignity. He made them *conferences* in fact by dissociating them from any show of stiff formality and making much of the conversational method of obtaining information and arriving at the policies to be employed in the work.

The Conference of 1878 met in Clarksville; and although the appointments made by Bishop Kavanaugh at that session left him in charge

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of the Columbia District, the portents indicated his early return to a station pulpit, and Clarksville was the place destined to receive him first. Accordingly, by appointment of Bishop Paine at the Conference of 1879, he entered upon a pastorate of four years in that important city. This was one of the most fruitful and gratefully remembered periods of his life. It was during this time that he made the acquaintance of a number of men of commanding public station, who remained his steadfast friends to the end. Notable amongst these was Col. John F. House, a distinguished jurist and once a member of the Lower House of Congress. Colonel House was a Methodist layman of the highest type of culture and religious rectitude. The relations between him and Dr. Barbee were intimate and tender. The jurist was a judge of sermons and a skillful reader of men. He was always in close touch with his pastor, just and charitable, but not given to adulation or excesses of speech. His tes-

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timony concerning this man whom he knew so well was as follows:

Dr. Barbee is one of the most remarkable men of this generation, one of the strongest preachers of the Methodist Church, and was one of the best-beloved pastors that ever filled the Clarksville pulpit.

When Dr. Barbee became Book Agent, he solicited and encouraged Colonel House to write a book on the fundamentals of religion and related subjects. This book, entitled "Can It Be False?" had a very wide reading and is still a salable volume. Of this volume both Judge Harlan, of the Supreme Court of the United States, and his associate, the late L. Q. C. Lamar, wrote in terms of the highest and warmest commendation, as attested by autograph letters in my possession. Dr. Barbee considered his share in the publication of this book one of his best services to his time.

During this pastorate at Clarksville he availed himself of the ripe experience of his past, added extensively to the store of his ef-

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fective knowledge, and put, more than ever before, the power and passion of his life into his preaching. He was turning eight and forty when he entered upon this pastorate. Soundness and vigor were in every inch of his frame. He could endure enormous drains upon his strength and feel no fatigue. He moved in self-mastery and pursued his tasks in the spirit of a perfect optimism. The second year of this pastorate witnessed a remarkable increase in the membership of the Church, and the record in this continued to the end of his term. His influence extended through the whole city, being confined to no class or age of its people; and to-day in its widest circles his name is as ointment poured forth.

When he was taking leave of his parishioners at Clarksville, a member of the Church, a professional man and one of large respectability and influence, said to him: "My wife and I do not disapprove of dancing. We would have had our daughter taught it as an art, ex-

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cept for our regard for you. We never heard you preach on this subject—indeed, we never heard you refer to it; but we well know what your view would be if expressed.” And thus it was that his influence was so pronounced that his life and character wrought more for his Master than did even his preaching. It is a fact that he never indulged in sensational preaching against the sins of society, and he had small tolerance for those who did. He cried out against *sin*, and the point of his preaching was to convince men of the guilt of breaking God’s law or of being at enmity with him. He left to God’s Spirit the work of showing to each man his own particular sins. This does not mean that he was not forward to denounce all forms of unrighteousness and “ungodly deeds of ungodly men;” no man was bolder to do so, but he abhorred that license which led men into “muck-raking society” in order to secure attention to their pulpiteering exploits. A quickened conscience always fol-



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lowed his ministry, and behind it remained the memory of a consistent walk. He believed that the world grew better each day; that the best and holiest people were in the Church; and that the Church was purer, stronger, and more influential in the world to-day than ever before.

The Clarksville pastorate closed in October, 1883. He had now filled acceptably and successfully the first places in his Conference except one—McKendree Church, Nashville. McKendree, then enjoying the greatest prosperity of its whole history, was without challenge or comparison regarded as the first pulpit of Methodism. In it had shone the great lights of the Conference. Upon its ministry waited a brilliant concourse of professional men and princes of finance. To this was to be added a large body of divinity students and the faculty of the Church's greatest institution of learning. Once each year also there came from every quarter of the connection repre-

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sentative men, clergymen and laymen, on affairs of the general Church, and these swelled the auditories on such high days. It was the sanctum preëminent of the Israel of Methodism. When the Conference met in Shelbyville in 1883, it was conceded on all sides that the logical and inevitable man for this first post of Methodism was James D. Barbee. This view was adopted by Bishop Pierce and his cabinet, and with the appointments of that year he entered upon the crowning experience of his ministerial life.

## CHAPTER XI.

### IN THE FIRST PULPIT OF METHODISM.

ALMOST from the beginning of the separate connectional existence of the Methodism of the South, McKendree Church was considered its greatest congregation. When Nashville became the official center of the denomination, this distinction settled upon it and remained apparent and unchallenged until a comparatively recent time, when local conditions began to be affected by the suburban extension of the new city. Since that time McKendree has become properly a downtown congregation. The history of this Church nearly parallels the history of American Methodism. It was organized in 1787, Gen. James Robertson, the illustrious pioneer of the Cumberland Valley and founder of the city of Nashville, being one of its early members. President James K. Polk also became a member of it near the close of

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his life. After death his body rested a time in solemn state before its altar, and from its pulpit Dr. John B. McFerrin, the renowned preacher, pronounced his funeral oration in the presence of a great concourse of citizens and representatives of the State and national governments. In the main auditorium of the church, in January, 1853, Andrew Johnson, afterwards President of the United States, took the oath of office as Governor of the State of Tennessee. Both Bishop Asbury and Bishop McKendree ministered often to the congregation of the earlier day. The first edifice was of rough stone, plain in design and harmonizing in every way with its pioneer surroundings; but it was succeeded by temple after temple, each more pretentious than the other, until appeared the stately Gothic structure which was injured by a storm about 1890, and completely destroyed by fire in July, 1905. In 1863 the church building was seized by the Federal government and used as a military hospital,

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the pastor, Dr. S. D. Baldwin, author of the famous war book, "Armageddon," being imprisoned as an enemy of the government. Later the military authorities turned the building over to Bishop Ames, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, North, who appointed to it a pastor of his liking. This occupancy continued until 1865, when the church was restored to its rightful congregation by order of Andrew Johnson, President of the United States. At the ensuing session of the Tennessee Conference Dr. Baldwin, having been liberated from military prison, was reappointed to its pastorate. After the war the congregation grew rapidly in membership and influence. By 1882 it numbered approximately one thousand members. This was the year in which Dr. Barbee became its pastor.

The congregation was now enjoying the greatest prosperity of its whole history. It typed the life and progress of a mighty religious community, one whose borders reached

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from ocean to ocean, and whose missionary spirit rested not in its going. The second foreign missionary sent out by the American Methodist Church was Fountain E. Pitts, who was pastor of McKendree in 1835, and whose appointment was to labor in Brazil. The spirit of the early times had not departed, and the pastor who came to it in 1882 brought a missionary intelligence and zeal which fitted well into the Church's traditions. Dr. Barbee's faithful and abundant pastoral labors and his strong and evangelical ministry in this high post of Methodism marked its climacteric years. The times which immediately followed witnessed such a Church extension and colonization movement from the central organization as subtracted from its strength and, to a degree, lessened its representative importance.

The work of a great city's central pastorate is always laborious. It is easy to see how the work of the McKendree pastorate in those years was exceptionally so. Its vast and grow-

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ing membership, its double quota of strangers, and its contingents of students from the Church's chief university and from a young woman's school directly under the Church's patronage, made a task that left no idle time to an honest pastor. The congregation had been accustomed to receive faithful pastoral service, but the local Church authority from whom this information is derived makes special mention of the pleasure and astonishment with which the diligence and industry of this shepherd of souls was regarded. Nor was this activity the fruit of a sudden impulse of dedication; it lasted through the four years of his pastorate, the last year being even more remarkable in this, it would seem, than the first. The results could have been easily anticipated. The membership of the Church grew to a figure far beyond former years; the missionary contributions of the congregation were increased from \$1,100 to \$2,500, being an advance of more than one hundred per cent. The

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pastor's salary was raised from \$3,000 to \$4,000 per year, being at that time, it is believed, the largest stipend paid in Southern Methodism. Nor were these forward steps in the Church's temporalities taken at the expense of the pulpit. Never before had the preacher done such preaching, and the congregations which waited on his ministry were the largest the Church has known in its history, before or since.

Every civic walk of the city gave its quota to the sittings which crowded the floors and galleries of this capacious old temple. The sermons which they heard Sabbath after Sabbath attached them more firmly to their preacher. These were sermons such as had no models and could not have been imitated. They were shaped in rugged simplicity from the convictions of his life and launched with precision and definiteness of purpose upon his hearers. Their echoes were heard throughout the city. The public press and the people of every class,



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the highest and lowest alike, discussed them and thus enhanced their potency. The whole city accepted him as a prophet, and he became in a sense the pastor of the entire community. The rugged and pertinent sentiments of his preaching outreached the authority of his creed and the natural force of his unaffected yet all but classic speech.

An incident which fell out during this McKendree ministry illustrates the claims made above, and shows how strong a hold Dr. Barbee had upon the city, and how much an arbiter he was able to make himself of its public opinion. The so-called "faith cure," the correlate of various religious extravagances, patronized by divergent creeds, and which has often made itself a disturbing and disrupting influence in Christian communities, appeared in Nashville about the year 1885. Having entrenched itself in one of the strongest Churches of the city, it made much headway. Leading Churchmen of social and financial stand-

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ing became committed to the fallacy. The situation gave concern to more than one local pastor. Dr. Barbee began to study the matter carefully, and at length determined to traverse the claims of the "curists" in a series of discourses. He was always averse to advertising his subjects in the columns of newspapers, but in this case he departed from his habit, and gave the public due notice of his purpose. The result was that there was a tremendous crush at his Sunday service. Interest in the subject was general, and the belief that the errors of the teaching would be completely exposed was almost equally general. The advocates, as the opponents, of faith cure were present. In an appeal to Scripture, reason, and common sense he exploded the specious claims of the "curists," and with withering satire and reproof he scattered them so that "no two of them remained together." It was a deathblow to the cult in that city, and it was never again able to lift its head.

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Passing reference is made elsewhere in these memoirs to the election of Dr. Barbee, during his McKendree pastorate, to the Chaplaincy of the Tennessee State Senate. Having had his services in this office during the session of 1886-87, the Senate, before adjournment, proceeded to vote to him an allowance for Chaplain's salary, this being the first instance in which such an appropriation was made, and the same was formally tendered him by the Speaker. This he declined to accept, writing to the Speaker a letter which is unique and all but exceptional in the history of political assemblies. These facts give it an interest which will justify the presentation in these pages of both it and the action of the Senate which it called out. His objection to receiving this compensation was not born of a foible, but was in pursuance of a principle with many ramifications in his mental and moral consciousness. The record is taken from the journal of the Senate, and is as follows—viz. :

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To Hon. Z. W. Ewing, Speaker of the Senate of the Forty-Fifth General Assembly of Tennessee, and the Members of Said Senate.

*Gentlemen:* With profound gratitude for your magnanimity and courtesy in appropriating the sum of three hundred dollars to compensate me for my humble services as Chaplain of your honorable body, I most respectfully decline to accept your bounty. My reasons for declining this favor are, first, that I am amply provided for in the salary paid by the Church which I have the honor to serve; and, secondly, because I esteem it the solemn duty of God's representatives to announce and emphasize the truth that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men," and to do this without hope of fee or reward. Therefore, when the honorable Speaker of this Senate requested me to act as Chaplain of this body, I was only happy to accede to his wishes and render gratuitous services in that direction. If God has been honored, and this Senate is satisfied with my services, I am more than compensated. Praying the blessings of Heaven to abide with you all, and that every one of you may finally reach the home of the beautiful and the good, I am

Most respectfully,

J. D. BARBEE.

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By Mr. Polk, Senate Resolution No. 39:

*Resolved*, That we tender to the Rev. J. D. Barbee our earnest and sincere thanks for his services to the Senate as its Chaplain during this session, and avail ourselves of the opportunity to express our high admiration for his ability, learning, and exemplary piety, making him one of the brightest lights in our social, moral, and religious progress.

The rules were suspended, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.—*Senate Journal*, 1887, pp. 779, 780.

The social meetings of McKendree have always been a feature of its life and the secret of its strong hold upon the public. It is of authentic record that in 1822, the year in which the Sunday school was introduced into the Cumberland Valley Churches, a large placard was posted upon the door of McKendree Church bearing this inscription—viz.: “No desecration of the holy Sabbath by teaching on the Sabbath day in this Church.” This was a typical protest against the Sunday school in the years of its probation. Six months from

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the time this notice was served, a Sunday school was organized behind the selfsame door on which it appeared, and through all its subsequent years McKendree's Sunday school has been one of its glories. The same has been true of the Epworth League in its day. A typical class meeting, one of power and true testimony, survived in McKendree Church up to a recent date, and may, in fact, only have been suspended by the burning of the church edifice in 1905. Many thousands, too, will remember the weekly prayer meetings of the old Church as "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." These meetings have ever been a place of strength-getting and comfort. An abundant testimony shows that, as pastor, Dr. Barbee brought these meetings up to a point of extraordinary prosperity. The attendance upon them was an echo of the attendance upon his Sunday ministrations. "It was no unusual sight," says one who remembers these days, "to see orthodox Jews and Irish Catholics at

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these prayer meetings." The social meetings of a Church are nearly always an answer to the social work done by the pastor in visitings and ministries in the homes of the people. Here cause and effect stood close to each other. *He visited.* To poor and rich alike he went. He found the poor and the sick as by instinct. This testimony, left within my reach, I cannot forbear to set down here, though it be but a reiteration: "His receipts, which he never destroyed, show that he gave load after load of coal to the poor; also food, clothing, and money. He was always giving, and when remonstrated with for being so liberal, he quietly replied: 'I am depositing in the Lord's bank.' " He reaped an immediate reward in the love and confidence of thousands and in a following such as few pastors in the itinerant ministry could boast. No pastor ever stayed more faithfully by his flock and pulpit.

A remarkably close friendship and affiliation have always subsisted between the McKendree

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congregation and that of the First Presbyterian Church, in Nashville, an equally great and historic organization. During Dr. Barbee's incumbency of the McKendree pulpit, that of the First Presbyterian Church was occupied by the distinguished Dr. Jere Witherspoon, a man of exceptional gifts and ability. There was a pleasant rivalry between the two congregations, born of the popularity of their respective pastors; but the relations between the two preachers were close and not unworthy the servants of a common Master. This period is looked back to by both congregations with special pride and satisfaction.

The last year of Dr. Barbee's pastorate at McKendree was cut short by his election to the Agency of the Church's Publishing House, but the details of this history belong to another chapter.



## CHAPTER XII.

### CONNECTIONAL WORK.

THERE is a belief in the Church, and it is shared by many, that the strongest men are in official position, and that successive sittings in the Church's representative assemblies is a certain sign of fitness and qualification. Investigation will often show the fact to be the contrary of this. The imperfect methods and the quite human influences which, in spite of good intentions, creep into ecclesiastical proceedings subject the Church to the same misadventures that often fall to secular organizations. It frequently happens that the best men are overlooked in the Church's search for legislators and administrative servants. It also not seldom happens, even when such are known, that supervening conditions make the call ineffective. These conditions may or may not arise from the self-seeking of

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others. They often do, however, and it would be presumption to claim for any system dependent upon human judgments a perfection which entirely eliminates this element. The best men in the Church often do not care for place; many are indifferent, and others—not a few they are—shrink from it. Thus it is that many men of great capabilities are never brought to share the larger responsibilities of the Church. Dr. Barbee was not a man marked by either taste or habit for official station. He did not seek it. In the nature of the situation in his Conference he should have been continuously, for a long series of years, a delegate to the general body, but his tastes kept him out of even the legitimate contest for such a distinction, and he was accordingly only occasionally honored with a seat in the delegation from his Conference. His election to the Book Agency grew out of a coalition of circumstances which he had no hand in creating, and to influences which came from the highest

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places of the Church. This unanimity of choice was not to be disregarded.

What happened to him in the pastorate happened to him also after his election to the Book Agency. He declined to use his position to secure any favor that did not come to him on grounds of personal preference or merit. Furthermore he was not diligent to leave undone those things which might have decreased the difficulties in his way to official preferment, It happened therefore that he was but twice selected to a seat in the General Conference. The first election occurred in 1882, while he was pastor at Clarksville; the second in 1898, during his first term as Book Agent. While sitting as a member of the General Conference in 1882, in the city of Nashville, he was described by the Rev. Dr. R. A. Young, in conversation with a member of another delegation, now a bishop in the Church, as a man of unusual ability and acumen—"the brains of his delegation." But with his great capacity

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for action in other directions and his great interest in the Church and its affairs, he was not a man to press to the front in debate or legislation. In the general body, as in other councils of the Church in which he participated, he displayed a characteristic modesty and quietness of manner. He spoke only when he had matured opinions, and knew, as few men have known, the value of a golden silence.

When honored by his brethren, he accepted the trust; but when they chose to honor others in his stead, he manifested no disappointment, either in manner or word. It may be said of him as truly as of any man who has lived amongst us that the promotions of his life came unsought, and that he rejoiced in the promotions and successes of those with whom he labored as brethren.

In July of the year 1886, and (as already related) while serving his fourth year as pastor of McKendree Church, he was elected to the

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Book Agency, a post which had become vacant through the death of the Rev. John B. McFerrin, D.D. A great man, long honored and trusted by the Church, had been called from an exceptionally important responsibility. It was a place not easily filled. The problems with which the Publishing House had struggled for a score of years were still, in a large measure, to be solved. The demand was for a man of exceptional gifts and fitness. It was very soon seen and admitted that the man had been found in James D. Barbee. Selecting a competent and trained business man in the person of Mr. D. M. Smith, the present Senior Publishing Agent, to be his assistant, he addressed himself to his new task with a zeal and intelligence of plan that revealed the master of affairs. The confidence which he inspired in the Church as the head of its publishing interests is seen in the fact that he was elected and reelected by succeeding General Conferences from 1890 to 1902, when he asked that his

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name be not considered for a longer continuance in office.

His manner of administering the great connectional trust which fell to him so unexpectedly was in keeping with his way of dealing with other responsibilities in the Church. It was the business of his Lord that he was about; he was serving not himself nor his own interests, but those of the Church. Several hundred employees in the various departments of the great printing establishment were under him. The rules which he followed in dealing with them could all be written in one word—love. An old employee said to the writer of these memoirs when the sheets were all but ready for the press: “Don’t fail to write it in your book that every employee of the old Publishing House—from the highest to the lowest—loved Dr. Barbee and realized that in him he had a friend, one whom he could trust, and one to whom he could go at any time. The Publishing House was like a family, and

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he was the father over it." It is written down, and as simply and frankly as the request was expressed; and there is no sincerer word in this volume, every sentence of which has been subjected to the test of the writer's inner sense of justice and verity. I recall with a feeling half of pleasure, half of sadness, but sadness only because the great and simple heart I loved beats no more, the scenes of a day in May, 1902, when his going from the headship of the House was definitely announced. Practically all the employees of the House assembled on the first floor of the old building at the noon hour, to intercept him as he went out. The grateful and tender surprise that held his venerable face in that moment is something to remember. The "breadwinners" swarmed about him with silent but reassuring faces. A handsome Morocco purse had been manufactured in the bindery that very morning and appropriately inscribed in letters of gold. Nor was it an empty receptacle. It had been literally

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stuffed with gold pieces, broad and shining. When somebody suggested a service, a remembrance, something unmarked in value, the donors only answered: "Our gift is of that which in value is most certain," and so out of their wages they pledged their love. When the pledger for the rest had spoken the heart words that matched the gift, and closing said, "Blessings on his good gray head!" there were tears born of no conventional sentiment but simply and naturally sprung from affectionate hearts. And so he went forth feeling that he had gained all things, having gained the love of the gentle.

During the administration of Dr. Barbee as Book Agent, the bonded debt of the Publishing House was reduced in the sum of \$47,000. During the same time the Conference claimants were paid, through the various Joint Boards of the Church, the sum of \$167,500, while the assets of the House were increased \$450,000, making a total of nearly three-quar-



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ters of a million of dollars created and left to the Church's credit during his incumbency. The business significance of this statement is of historical moment, as it shows that the men of the kingdom are not theorists only, but may be as well men of affairs and sound judgment. Except during his Agency (part of the time with Mr. D. M. Smith as Junior Agent), no money has ever been paid by the Publishing House to Conference claimants until during the year 1905, under Smith & Lamar.

By his inimitable courtesy and his systematic visitations at the Conferences, he popularized the Publishing House, and put it in the front as a commanding institution of the Church. During his incumbency the producing power of the House was greatly increased, the character of all our connectional literature was improved, and many valuable copyrights were secured and put out. It is believed that he visited personally every Conference in the connection, and presented before each the para-

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mount cause of Christian literature. Reference was made in a former chapter to his diligence in putting upon young preachers the high duty of dealing justly with books. The volume of circulation in all departments of our literature during his administration enormously exceeded that of any previous time in our history.

It must be allowed that it was a certain spirit of his administration rather than its methods that accounted for the great popularity of it. He laid no claim to Napoleonic qualities in business, but he selected carefully and conscientiously his helpers. He adhered, too, to the idea that the mission of the House is *to make literature* and that for the *Methodist Church*. He may have lacked, and doubtless did lack, some of the *insight* and some of the *outlook* of the secular publishing world; but the lines which he followed were safe, and the advance which he secured was enduring.

In January, 1891, he went, as the head of

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the Publishing House, to establish the Church newspaper ordered to be printed in San Francisco. As the editor elect of the proposed paper, I was brought into an intimate knowledge of the plans which he laid out for that venture. His ideal of the Church's official organ in that wide and promising field was very high. It has never been reached, but the fault was not his, as it has not been that of the men who have been successively called to edit it. He had great pride in the paper when it appeared, and for a long time was an occasional contributor to its columns. Some of his contributions in this connection were of a more than passing interest, especially in view of the plainly changing ideals of the day.

Near the close of Dr. Barbee's third term as Book Agent the claim which the Church had long held and urged against the Federal government for the use and abuse of its Publishing House during the War between the States was brought to a successful hearing and was

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collected. This was a notable event, in itself enough to distinguish any administration. But the treatment of the history of the collection of this claim, with all that followed it, is reserved for another chapter.

The establishment of the important Publishing House at Dallas was in pursuance of the policies of his administration. He took a prophetic view of the future of his Church in the wide field of the West, and entered enthusiastically into every scheme for more deeply and firmly settling its interests in that region. It was particularly gratifying to him to find, in the hour when judgment settled upon him with hasty and exacting demands, that the constituencies of the West were so nearly unanimous in a sympathetic support of his work.

Dr. Barbee's administration of the Book Agency covered a period of a little less than sixteen years, beginning in July, 1886, and closing in May, 1902, being the longest term ever served by any man in the same post. In

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some respects it may be accounted the greatest service of his life. Certain it is that no service rendered by him in the Church drew larger drafts upon his strength, loyalty, and conscientious self-devotion. What befell both him and his charge is written in the volume of a book that all may read.

Retiring from connectional work, he seemed strong and vigorous; but there remained but a brief stage of his journey. Rugged without, like the hills, a silent and certain death wrought within. But he went at the word of command, as he had gone aforetime; and for two years in a most peaceful lot, amongst those who revered and loved him most, he labored, and then was his simple, wonderful life rounded with a sleep. A future chapter will be devoted to the details of these last two years of his life.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### SETTLEMENT OF THE WAR CLAIM.

IN January, 1898, the Church's claim against the Federal government for the abuse of its Publishing House during the War between the States was settled in full, the amount allowed by act of Congress being \$288,000. This claim had been pending for more than thirty years, and had baffled the skill and efforts of numerous agents and representatives of the Church. That the Congress was ever brought to favorably and finally consider its adjustment was due to Dr. Barbee's persistent and never-wearying efforts as Book Agent. Bishop Keener, writing to him under date of January 28, 1898, said concerning this settlement: "I congratulate you on the passage of the impossible. That the Houses [of Congress] passed a bill in relief of the Southern Methodist Publishing House, which for thirty years has been on the

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anvil, is a wonderful fact. . . . I congratulate you because you have had hope, a lively hope, when it had quite expired in my breast, and almost in every other breast that knew what such claims are usually worth."

Almost immediately following the settlement of this claim charges were made in certain public prints, and also in the United States Senate, that concealment and evasion had been practiced by representatives of the Church in withholding from United States Senators information as to the fee to be paid to the Church's attorney in the case. The specific charge made in the Senate was this—namely, that the Book Agents of the Church, in a correspondence with Senator Pasco, of Florida, and Senator Bate, of Tennessee, had so shaped their answers to letters and telegrams of the said Senators as to mislead them concerning attorney's fees and the amount of the same to be paid in the case, the contention being that had the facts been known the claim would not have been allowed

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except on conditions named by the Senate, that body fixing the fee to be paid.

That there may be embodied in this history the means of an impartial judgment on this matter, the before-mentioned correspondence is here given in its order. The bill allowing the claim passed the Senate on March 8, 1898. On March 5 Senator Pasco, who had been interested in the bill from the beginning, wrote the following letter to the Book Agents:

Messrs. Barbee & Smith, Nashville, Tenn.

*Dear Sirs:* Some malicious persons are circulating a slanderous story about the Capitol, with the evident purpose to obstruct the passage of our bill. It is to the effect that you have made a contract with Mr. Stahlman to pay him forty per cent of the amount recovered. It was not necessary for me to get any contradiction, because I know very well that the Agents of the Publishing House knew better how to conduct their trust than to make such an improvident bargain. I knew also that there was no power to make such a contract, so I did not hesitate to denounce it as a malicious slander; and I am sure also that the Sen-



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ators who came to me for information upon the subject are thoroughly satisfied with my statement. But as a matter of caution it will be very well for me to have a positive denial from you, which I can use if it appears necessary, either before the bill comes up for action or on the floor of the Senate. So I suggest that you send me a telegram on Monday as to the facts of the case, and authorizing me, as I am sure you can, to deny this statement. I am glad to say that there is a very fair prospect of getting the bill up for consideration by Tuesday, and everything indicates that our efforts will be successful. I have had a good many conferences with Senators with reference to it, and the many assurances of support that have been given to me and others who have taken an interest in the matter convince me that it has gained strength since it came to the Senate. Senator Bate has been unceasing in his efforts to bring the matter to a successful conclusion, and we shall continue to do all in our power to get a vote as early as is possible.

Yours very truly,

S. PASCO.

This letter was received by the Book Agents on March 7, and they immediately sent in reply to it the following telegram—viz. :

## Rev. J. D. Barbee

The statement is untrue, and you are hereby authorized to deny it.

Thirty minutes later, fearing, as the testimony shows, that the telegram might be considered insufficient, the Agents sent an additional "wire" as follows:

Have asked Mr. Stahlman to call at once and see you. He is a gentleman upon whose statements you may implicitly rely. He is our friend and neighbor and an official member of our Church, whose interest in our behalf reaches beyond and above pecuniary consideration.

Mr. Stahlman, referred to in this telegram, was the attorney or agent of the Church, employed by the Book Committee to prosecute this claim before Congress. On the same day (March 7) Senator Bate, of Tennessee, sent to the Book Agents the following telegram—viz.:

Telegraph to-day answer to Senator Pasco's letter to you Saturday as to Stahlman having fee of forty per cent, or any other fee, in case

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of payment of your claim. I would like to hear from you also. In my judgment, if true, it will endanger the bill.

To this telegram the Book Agents replied by wire in these words:

Wired Senator Pasco early this morning as follows: "The statement is untrue, and you are hereby authorized to deny it."

On the day following this exchange of telegrams the Senate bill passed on its final vote. In the concluding arguments in favor of the bill the telegrams of the Book Agents were used, but dissociated from the letter which called them out; also the prefatory statement introducing them in arguments before the Senate left out the item paramount in the letter to which they were an answer—namely, that that letter inquired if a *particular per cent* (namely, forty per cent) was to be paid; and made it appear that the inquiry of the Senator had been if "*any* large sum" was to be paid. It is allowed that this oversight was unintentional;

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but it is precisely on this point that the whole history of the case turns. If the inadvertence had not occurred—if the letter calling out the telegrams had been read before the Senate along with the telegrams—the famous war claim controversy would never have had a record. The Agents always contended that they did not object to its being known—they supposed, indeed, that it was known—that the Church's attorney was to receive a compensation. They only objected to giving, and were under obligations not to give, the details of their contract, except through their attorney; and this information, as an explanation satisfactory to their questioners, they sought to convey by wiring their attorney to visit them. The attorney obeyed and reported that the interview was satisfactory. The only other correspondence on this subject was a telegram sent previously to Senator Bate by Dr. Barbee from Bryan, Tex., in answer to certain inquiries about the claim, as follows—viz.:

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Your telegram mailed me here. Confer with Stahlman, who understands the case thoroughly and has full authority.

J. D. BARBEE.

All this may be seen from the Congressional Record and shows that the Book Agents had, in the very brief correspondence they had been called upon to conduct with Senators, sought to make it clear that they had left their case with their attorney. They had not sought a correspondence with Senators, but had simply and briefly answered their inquiries in a way which they believed would be satisfactory in leading to the information which the Senators sought, at the same time conforming to the ethics of business obligations. That the plan miscarried should not be charged to any immoral or dishonorable motive on the part of the Book Agents. It is easy, in the light of history fulfilled, to see how it might have been differently conducted, but the demand of the moment imposing the necessity of telegraphic

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quickness left little opportunity for reflection. Yet the effort to bring the two Senators at one, and the repeated effort to put them in the way of any information proper to be had, shows the consistency and sincerity of the Book Agents in their replies.

In all that is said here there is no purpose to lay charge of insincerity upon others; this is now no longer a question of controversy, but one of settled history. The present writer seeks only to use the prerogative of the historian. In doing this it is his right and his justification to show that if mistakes of judgment were made by the Book Agents, the United States Senators are equally open, on the face of this record, to the charge of having made like mistakes. With better knowledge of all the situations, the Book Agents could have avoided their mistakes and thus have prevented the issue. It is equally true that if the Senators had avoided *their* mistakes—especially the one cited—the controversy would never

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have come about. The after record shows, as will be made clear as this story proceeds, that the Church and the public finally took this view of the case. History herein repeated its ancient mandate:

Let justice be done  
Though the heavens fall.

The sum of indemnity allowed by the Senate bill was promptly paid into the hands of the Book Agents, who thereupon made a settlement with the Church's attorney on the contract basis of thirty-five per cent of the whole sum, which sum was \$288,000. Sometime later—that is to say, in June of the same year—charges, as before stated, were made that the Senate had been misled in allowing the claim, and the telegrams above quoted were made the basis of the said charges. A formal investigation was ordered and undertaken by the United States Senate. The Book Agents joined in the request for this investigation in the following telegram sent to a number of Senators:

## Rev. J. D. Barbee

We hope the Lodge resolution will pass, and that a thorough investigation may follow. We do not care to discuss the matter now. All we ask on our behalf, as well as the Church, is that you and other Senators who supported the claim shall suspend judgment and refrain from comment or criticism until after the committee shall have done its work. We are persuaded that we shall be able to show, to the satisfaction of the committee and the Senate, that all statements made by us designed to promote the passage of the bill were justified by the facts and circumstances of the case.

The procedure entered into by the Senate Investigating Committee was largely an informal one, and was confined to a single passage in the long history which bore upon the case—namely, the purpose and effect of the before-mentioned telegrams. The Book Agents appeared before the Committee of Investigation and entered their contention in answer to the charges of evasion and concealment. It was to the effect that categorical answers had been given to categorical questions, and that in withholding specific information as to attor-



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ney's fees the Book Agents had acted within what they believed to be their legal and moral rights. The claim being just, it followed, as they contended, that the representatives of the Church had a right to employ an attorney and pay him such fee as they judged equitable, being responsible only to their constituency, the general body. Furthermore they disclaimed any purpose to deceive or mislead those responsible for the allowance of the claim.

There could be no more just or simple way of presenting these contentions and disclaimers than by introducing here the sworn statement submitted by Dr. Barbee to the Senate committee charged with this investigation. This statement was printed in the *Congressional Record*, and is as follows:

### STATEMENT OF DR. BARBEE.

As explanatory of my testimony concerning the letter of Senator Pasco, addressed to Barbee & Smith, Nashville, Tenn., bearing date of March 5, 1898, and the telegrams sent by Barbee & Smith to Senators Pasco and Bate

## Rev. J. D. Barbee

on March 7, 1898, I would beg to submit the following statement under oath:

1. That we believed our claim against the United States for the occupancy, use, and damage of the Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, during the late War between the States, was a just and equitable claim, and lay as a legal obligation upon the United States government.

2. The claim was presented to Congress soon after the late war and pressed upon the attention of this honorable body for twenty-five years afterwards, with no increasing probability of a favorable result, finally, until Maj. E. B. Stahlman became our attorney.

3. The Book Committee finally employed Mr. E. B. Stahlman, with power of attorney to manage the case and procure an appropriation by Congress in our behalf if he could. It was agreed to pay him a contingent fee of thirty-five per cent of whatever amount he might obtain, he bearing the whole expense of the undertaking.

4. While we believed that Senator Pasco, in his letter of the 5th of March, asked for no information, but only a denial that we were to pay our attorney forty per cent contingent fee, yet, allowing that he did seek to know whether or not we were to pay an exorbitant fee of any amount, I do not believe that fifty or even sev-

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enty-five per cent would have been an excessive fee; for fifty or even twenty-five per cent remaining to the Church was more than any of us had hope of recovering. Not that we doubted the justice of our claim, but because we had lost all hope of ever obtaining our own; therefore, anything was better than nothing.

5. Our first telegram to Senator Pasco, March 7, we designed to deny that we were to pay Mr. Stahlman forty per cent. That was all we meant, and what we meant; but if it be contended that Senator Pasco meant to inquire concerning any exorbitant fee, then our answer was correct, for thirty-five per cent was not exorbitant, but reasonable.

6. Fearing Senator Pasco might misinterpret our telegram to mean that no commission whatever was to be paid Mr. Stahlman, we sent another dispatch written a few minutes after the first, advising him to call on our attorney for further information, and wired Major Stahlman to call and see Senator Pasco about the matter.

7. Major Stahlman informed us that he did call on Senator Pasco, who said he was satisfied. The reference in this second telegram to Senator Pasco to Mr. Stahlman's interest in our behalf as reaching "above and beyond pecuniary considerations" was justified by the fact that Mr. Stahlman had for years labored

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in our interest without any contract for a fee, and because he reduced the fee from fifty to thirty-five per cent, as shown by the evidence, mainly because he was a member of our Church and felt an interest in its welfare.

8. Our telegram to Senator Bate told him we had wired Senator Pasco, but did not answer his inquiry because we did not feel that it had any bearing on the merits of our claim, and because it was due to our attorney, Mr. Stahlman, who was in Washington, and in keeping with our original promise to him not to divulge the nature of the agreement, and to let him meet that inquiry in such a manner as he thought proper.

9. Our correspondence with Senator Pasco, after the bill had been passed, shows that we had not designed to mislead Senators Pasco and Bate, and that Senator Pasco was not by our intention misled.\* J. D. BARBEE.

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\*The letter of the Book Agents in the correspondence here referred to is as follows:

NASHVILLE, TENN., May 29, 1898.

Hon. S. Pasco, United States Senate, Washington, D. C.

*Dear Sir:* On the 7th of March we received a letter from you under the date of March 5th, in which you stated, among other things:

"Some malicious persons are circulating a slanderous story about the capitol, with the evident purpose to obstruct the passage of our bill. It is to the effect

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The Senate Committee reported, declaring that "no censure should rest upon the Church" for any action of its agents or representatives, and concluded with this finding—viz. :

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that you have made a contract with Mr. Stahlman to pay him forty per cent of any amount recovered."

To this we responded :

"Letter of 5th received. The statement is untrue, and you are hereby authorized to deny it."

We also, on the 7th of March, received a telegram from Senator Bate on the same subject, and repeated to him the telegram we had sent to you.

We should not deem it necessary to say anything further on the subject, but for the fact that during the discussion of our bill in the Senate (as shown by the *Congressional Record*, which we have just read) statements were made by one or two Senators which, by inference at least, were calculated to create the impression that nothing was to be paid by the Publishing House to any attorney or representative of the Book Agents.

The claim, as you are aware, was pending in Congress for nearly thirty years. During several years of that period we had a Washington attorney (Mr. Moyers) employed on a percentage basis. This arrangement was made with the full knowledge and consent of our Book Committee (the Book Agents, as very properly stated by you, having no authority to make such contracts without the consent of that committee). For reasons satisfactory to our friends in the Senate

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The Committee has not thought proper to suggest to the Senate any action concerning this matter, it appearing to the committee that the governing authorities of the Church must be allowed to take such measures as it may

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and House we declined to renew the contract when it expired, and instead accepted the proffered assistance of others, some of whom were devoted friends and members of our Church, and one of whom, even as early as 1891, and before the agreement with the Washington attorney expired, had rendered valuable assistance in our endeavors to pass the bill. This gentleman was as earnest in his endeavor to help us then as he was subsequently; the only difference being that formerly much of his time was occupied in other pursuits, while during the past two and a half years he has had time which he could call his own, and a good portion of which during his extended sojourn in Washington he has seen fit to largely devote to our interests.

It is hardly to be presumed that this gentleman, and others who assisted him, should be willing to serve the Publishing House, and incur the large expense of staying in Washington, without some compensation; and if, therefore, in the final adjustment it was deemed proper to pay these gentlemen a reasonable compensation for their services and expenses, and this compensation was paid with the consent of the proper authorities of the Church, you as well as other Senators, we are sure, will agree that it was not an improper thing to do.

Truly,

BARBEE & SMITH.

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think proper after it has been fully acquainted with the facts concerning the passage of the bill and the final disposition of the money appropriated by it.

The chapter which followed the Senate's investigation has become a part of the history of the Church. The present writing relates to that history, but is neither an apology for it nor an *ex parte* version of it. Its purpose is to reveal the *life* of the man who was the chief actor in the events chronicled therein. The part borne by him was recorded in the fiercest light of public judgment. But he was unstrained in the hour of his baptism. He asked no man to carry his burden or to divide with him his accountability to God and the Church. Believing that he had followed conscience and duty throughout, he stood unmoved to the end. In this passage of his life it was with him as it had been in all others. His self-reliance stood like the mountains, and his faith took hold upon the invisible. He was mellowed, transfigured, but he was not shaken. The

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floods passed over him, but the subsiding waters showed him standing in his original place. The calm, patient, and meekly submissive spirit which characterized him throughout this sordest trial of his life and the noble and blameless demeanor which he maintained to the end are to his brethren the confirmation of his testimony that in all things he walked in his integrity before God.

History, like the natural sciences, first discusses and analyzes the subjects and issues pertinent to it, and then settles them in unalterable conclusions. At great length, both of time and argument, the Church discussed the issues involved in the settlement of this famous "claim." As the result of the "long parliament" of opinion a decision was entered in its officially closed record, the Journal of the General Conference. The summary of that entry is as follows: First, that the Church had a historic, just, and legal claim against the government for the use and abuse of its Publishing House.



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Secondly, that the amount finally received and accepted as payment in full of this claim was not equal to the loss sustained. Thirdly, that in answer to the complaint that this payment had been secured through misleading statements of the Church's representatives, the bishops of the Church had offered to secure the return to the government of the whole sum paid (which action was indorsed by the General Conference), but that the offer had been declined. Fourthly, that the Church repudiated "all the acts of concealment, misstatement, or unfairness on the part of any or all persons representing the Church in the prosecution of this claim before Congress." Fifthly, this action is declared to be "a final settlement of the whole matter."

This settlement was accepted with satisfaction by the Church at large, and the affair is believed to be closed for all time. There is here no desire to reopen it, but no biography of the late Senior Book Agent would be complete

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without a reference to this officially closed chapter of the Church's history. A somewhat particular review of its details becomes a matter of justice both to the man and the history itself. As these details are viewed through the perspective of time they more and more contribute to a just and favorable view of the motives and acts of the man on whom the chief force of the storm of criticism fell. Truth is that thing which grows stronger with the tests of time.

This writing deals only with the man who is its subject, and with his actions and their springs in this and other junctures of his life. We seek to reflect the mature conclusions of human judgment and the enlightenment of fact and time. By reason of these the man never adjudged to penalty compels in memory the verdict of blamelessness in motive and sincerity in act. To show how this must be is our pleasure, as it is our office.

In the first place, as has been seen, the va-

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lidity of the Church's claim had never been in question, least of all on the part of the government. Litigation for its recovery had been in course for thirty years. To conduct this litigation many attorneys and sub-agents had been employed. To several of these considerable sums of money had been paid, and to at least one a large percentage of the sum sought to be secured was promised on condition of collection. These matters were an open record. The principle and practice of attorneyships and the paying of fees had been established by precedents allowed, and sometimes patronized, by Congress itself. It was understood that if this claim was ever collected it must be done through an attorney who would give long and patient attention to the prosecution of it. The fee of such an attorney was a logical inference—in view of precedents, a necessity.

Under the administration of Dr. Barbee as Book Agent, or head of the Publishing House, the Book Committee employed an attorney

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to collect this claim, and entered into a contract to pay him a percentage of any part of the principal recovered. This contract was similar to others made in former cases in connection with the same claim, only the percentage fee was slightly larger. After no little delay a bill providing for the payment of a sum equal to fifty per cent of the original claim passed the Lower House of Congress. No incident or question attended this action, and no subsequent issue was made upon it. Going later to the Senate, the bill had reached the final stage of debate, and also without incident, when, as before noted, certain Senators raised with the Book Agents a question as to the fees to be paid the Church's attorney. The correspondence was, considering the importance afterwards attached to the issue, of meager character. It was carried on chiefly by telegraph and covered but a few hours of time. It is unnecessary to go into the details of this correspondence. It is clear to one who studies it

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as it appears upon the pages of the official record that the meagerness of it and the rapidity with which the bulk of it was conducted made it impossible for the correspondents to understand one another's view point or purpose. Even honest men cannot annihilate space nor change the conditions imposed by it.

In support of the claim that, where given, the answers had been categorical and direct, appeal was made to the record. On the record was also entered the Book Agents' claim of a right to maintain silence regarding professional secrets between themselves and their attorney. This position was consistently contended for to the end. But upon deductions made from the record the Church, as well as the secular public, divided in opinion. Seldom, if ever, in the history of the Church has any incident held a wider or more distracting interest. For four years the discussion went on. It was uppermost in official Church meetings, and became a general topic of private conver-

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sation. But the tendency was ever toward a juster and fairer view of the motives and acts involved. A foregleam of the light of impartial history began to illumine the way of judgment. It was understood, at last, that a just judgment of the case must take into account the personality and character of the man upon whom criticism was chiefly visited. That judgment was freely taken both by the Church and the public, and the verdict given long before the patient spirit which suffered much had gone to be with its Judge.

Writing to Dr. Barbee under date of April 28, 1899, more than a year after the payment of the Claim, and when the spirit and word of judgment were at their height, Bishop John C. Keener said:

I have approved your course from the beginning, and still do. Your responses and attitude before the Senate were highly creditable to you—as I read it in the *Record* itself. . . . The amount paid for securing the claim was not more than was customary. It was attend-

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ed with much risk and required wonderful industry. I would not have given one thousand dollars for the whole of it.

Writing a little later, he said :

I am glad that you and Brother Smith found in my last letter to you an assuring statement in the view I have in the wisdom, fairness, and success of your conduct of the Publishing House Claim through the Congress of the United States. There was in it nothing but an open hand.

The last official word of Dr. Barbee on this issue, which meant to him the sum of life and death and the hereafter, cannot fail to be of the greatest interest to those whose eyes pass over these pages. It was given in writing in answer to the challenge of his own Conference—the Tennessee—at its memorable session held in Clarksville in the autumn following the action of the United States Senate in June. The stenographic report of the proceedings exhibits the following minutes—viz. :

J. A. Orman read the following paper from J. D. Barbee :

## Rev. J. D. Barbee

“CLARKSVILLE, TENN., October 21, 1898.

“To the Bishop and Members of the Tennessee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, now in session at Clarksville, Tenn.

“*Brethren*: Concerning the discussion now in progress relative to the Publishing House War Claim, I have to state respectfully:

“1. That in all I did to collect said claim I acted conscientiously; and, upon a calm retrospect, I am fully and finally persuaded that I walked before God ‘in mine integrity’ in every particular.

“2. Seeing that a misconstruction of my motives in this matter has offended some and troubled them, and that I may have made a mistake,\* I am grieved and sorrowful at this result.

“3. I am reverently and affectionately in your hands, and trust your wisdom and justice in the adjudication of the result.”

. . . The character of James D. Barbee then passed without a dissenting voice.

Long after the matter had passed out of the realm of ecclesiastical judicature and had

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\*The clause “and that I may have made a mistake” was not in Dr. Barbee’s original draft of this paper, but was inserted by his attorney, Dr. Orman, with his consent.



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cooled to its last consistency from the fires of prejudice and discussion, Dr. Barbee set himself the task of making a statement of all the questions and points involved. This was meant for the use of his family, his friends, and the historian who might have occasion to touch upon the case. From this statement I make a few extracts :

1. The claim was just and equitable, and lay as an obligation of debt upon the United States.

2. The Book Agents never asked for charity or based their claim upon eleemosynary ground. They asked to be paid for the use, abuse, and destruction of their property by the armies of the United States government.

3. They proved the justice and equity of their claim by competent and reliable witnesses, and by other forms of testimony.

4. There was *no intention* to deceive or mislead the United States Senate or any member of that body.

5. The Book Agents took every precaution to prevent deception or misleading. They wired their attorney to go and see Senator Pasco, and wired Pasco accordingly. Stahlman informed

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the Agents that he went and saw Pasco, as he had been directed.

To a friend he wrote, in review of the events so important to him: "Five times ecclesiastical courts have passed my administration of this matter under review—in two of those instances the proceedings having been of a judicial character—and yet in every case the verdict of complete exoneration was unanimous." To another he wrote: "I have sat silently by and looked on the mighty stir which was being made over my official conduct. I have viewed it with mingled feelings of surprise and pain. Nevertheless I have not allowed myself to become embittered, or for a moment to entertain a feeling of resentment or revenge." And in this spirit he bore himself to the end.

A more consistent vote of confidence could not have been asked by the man himself than that which was entered, stage by stage, as his case advanced to the final tribunal—a settled public opinion. Before every court of the

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Church to which an itinerant Methodist preacher is amenable he answered the implications involved in this controversy, and from each issued the verdict: "This man hath done nothing worthy of bonds: we find no evil in him."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE PREACHER AND PASTOR.

OUR human lives do not spend themselves in the present joys and uses, but remain as precedents, in their ways, for others. "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Before proceeding to a review of the details of the last stage of this history, I feel led to study in a particular way, and for a particular use, some of the stronger points of this commanding character which could be adverted to only incidentally in preceding chapters. These notable qualities were revealed equally in the official, private, and domestic walk of the man. The present chapter deals with the preacher and pastor.

A detailed study of the ministerial life of Dr. Barbee would furnish material for a manual of superior value to young preachers. He went slowly and studiously through all the grades

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of ministerial development, from the humblest to the highest. Each lower station was quitted for a higher, with the approving sense that he had wrought his best in the lower. It was this practical excellence which so constantly recommended him to the appointing powers. The memory of his boyhood ministry is still fresh amongst the rural patriarchs who heard him on his first circuit in 1852. Will T. Hale, the well-known Tennessee poet, who rusticated amongst the highlands of Overton County some years ago, reports that this ministry is still a topic of conversation there, though nearly sixty years have passed since the Alabama rustic preached there his "first sermon."

Sermon-making is a fine art—the finest of all arts. Like the other arts, when developed to its best it follows the ancient precedents and stands close in toward divine originals. Novelty in sermon-making is as hurtful to the spirit of preaching as it is violative of the spirit of homiletic art. The secret of all art is simplicity,

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and this holds preëminently in preaching. The great preachers have conformed their sermons to this ideal. Luther, Wesley, and Spurgeon are conspicuous examples.

Dr. Barbee's style of sermonizing could be styled neither unique nor original. He followed the surest precedents, and of these he chose the severest type. It was in the matter and *point* of his preaching that originality emerged; there he was himself, and not another. With an exegetical, doctrinal base and plan, he traversed the limits of his knowledge of men, motives, and social incentives. The result was a kind of preaching that men remembered. I recall with more or less distinctness, at this date, the outlines of a sermon on the character of Jacob. The deductions were natural, logical, scriptural, but the effect of the discourse was to set before the mind of the audience a living picture of the Hebrew notable. Every human feature became distinct. The perfect and the imperfect in Jacob blended

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to make a unity—a result that “in nothing extenuated,” and that for that reason was recognized as the embodiment of a teaching parable.

The preacher was not a great orator. There was little of the blandishment of style and almost nothing of the actor in his pulpit work. His language was strong—the Shakespearean word, as noted before—direct, and perspicuous. Illustration was not wanting, but the likeness was always out of familiar ways. The innocent voices of little children or the songs and cries of men and women rang through them. In this there was a true eloquence, a pathos, a joy-making, that, heard once, one desired to hear again. A highly successful preacher and pastor who was a divinity student at Vanderbilt University during Dr. Barbee’s incumbency at McKendree recited to me recently the story of a sermon which he heard him preach in that pulpit. The text was: “What think ye of Christ?” “It was a sermon,” said the narrator, “whose effects can never depart from my mind.

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The climax of it came when in illustration he called up in testimony the shade of Julian the Apostate. With a measure of his own life-blood purpling in his dying palm the Apostate gave testimony to the divinity of the King. The inflected voice of the preacher as he cried that oft-heard expression, 'O Galilean, thou hast conquered!' shook me as it shook the great audience about me." Such was the preacher who had reached a mastery of his art by the way of his own and the hearts of others.

He had a singular tact in preaching funeral sermons, and he preached many. In a certain delicate situation of this character he was officiating with Bishop McTyeire. The bishop, with a characteristic tone and manner, said: "Doctor, you are the pastor; you will do the talking." When the difficult task was over, the bishop said: "You traveled on a hair line, but you honored God and the truth." He once preached, by urgent request, at the funeral of a man who was in life understood to be un-



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friendly to the preacher; but he spoke tenderly of the departed and spread the dust above him with solemn words, praying fervently for those he had left behind. He was afterwards approached by a familiar and taken to task for presuming to bury a man who in life had declared his displeasure toward him. The reply of the preacher to this serio-comic speech was calm but appropriately satirical: "You say this man was my enemy. Very well; one may be excused any time for decently putting his enemy underground."

The record of the pastor comports with that of the preacher. A fragrance of Christly ministry marked his upward journey. He literally fulfilled the mission of a minister of the gospel. Like his Master, he went about doing good. As a pastor he visited the members of his flock faithfully. The sick of his parish he attended as constantly as did the physicians, and knew how to administer the comfort of his Lord in the sick chamber and by the dying

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bed. An authority from which I have frequently drawn says: "He had no patience with the idea that a person could be too sick to see a minister, provided the minister were the proper person to enter the sick room. He was never denied admission, and always thought he had done good in going and praying by the bedside of the sufferer."

His ministry was laborious and uninterrupted. He never took a vacation or a pleasure trip in his life. He looked after all the work of the Church, gave personal attention to all its societies and organizations, and administered its charities with a tender and sympathetic care. His private papers, examined after his death, show that his quiet and unproclaimed personal gifts to charity represented a good part of his income. His benefactions were often so great as to leave him in debt, and yet it is the pleasing record of his life that his debts were always paid in full. In addition to the ordinary charities, he gave liberally

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to education, the cause of missions, and the other larger interests of the Church. Giving was with him a passion and a pleasure. He did not tie himself down to the Jewish tithe, but found a higher standard in the Christian's sense of loyalty and love.

His well-matured thoughts on the subject of Christian giving were presented in a sermon which he preached on "Money." In that discourse he said: "The New Testament has made every man the umpire of this question [of giving], as it relates to his individual and personal obligations. It has not, however, left him without guide or gauge in arriving at a conclusion, but by unmistakable hint has suggested how much he owes to the Lord in this direction. . . . We own nothing in our own separate rights, but hold what we possess in trust for him. We are tenants at will, and must vacate our trusts at his command; for while we hold it, all, or any part of it, is subject to his order, just as a deposit in

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bank is at the command of the depositor's check."

The missionary enterprises of the Church appeal to its truly committed ministers. They did so especially to this man, not through a wish to meet his pastoral obligation, but from the principle underlying the evangel. He preached a missionary gospel and believed in missions as he believed in God. His yearly financial reports, made as a pastor, to the Annual Conference will show, in the missionary items, what stress he laid upon contributions to this cause. The Board of Missions, in May, 1888, soon after his accession to the Book Agency, elected him Missionary Treasurer. He was disinclined to accept this additional trust, but did so at the earnest solicitation of Bishop McTyeire. His good judgment was again displayed in the selection of his assistant, Mr. T. B. Holt, an honored layman, whom he called to be his clerk in handling the funds of the Board. For this service he accepted no

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salary. A prominent member of the Board of Missions of that day says: "The name and counsel of Dr. Barbee gave confidence in the work." It was in this as in all other trusts undertaken by him. He served for no other reward than that of service itself. Fidelity and self-devotion marked his every step in life.

When the City Mission of Nashville was organized, he took a deep interest in the work, and contributed of his time and means to its support. He was accustomed to preach on afternoons and in the evenings at these mission appointments; and his Sundays, when not otherwise employed in ministerial work, were given to such places as were assigned him by the missionary in charge. The Crawford Street Mission especially drew largely on his service. When the Rev. George W. Winn died, in 1894, Dr. Barbee was appointed City Missionary to fill out the unexpired term. Although burdened with official cares, he put in full time on this laborious task. At the end of

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the year the salary which he received from the Domestic Mission Fund was divided to the last penny among the young preachers and students who had helped in the work. This was his way of serving the Church and of helping those who were preparing for a future ministry.

As a presiding elder Dr. Barbee was particularly careful of the interests of the preachers under his charge, and dwelt with them in the warmest and tenderest confidence. He opened his heart freely to them, and hastened to repeat to them any generous or approving words which he heard on the outside. He was equally concerned to shield them from unnecessary censure, and to secure for them the official approval which they merited. It is authentically on record that he once sold the piano in his home, and that an heirloom, in order to provide money for the urgent needs of one of the preachers in his district. No struggling worthy brother ever appealed to him in vain.

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A noteworthy thing in the ministry of Dr. Barbee was his cordial relations with the Churches and ministers of other faiths. Men of no faith also sought his confidence and advice, seeing the catholic spirit of his life and walk. The pulpits of all the evangelical Churches welcomed him, and men of all faiths attended his ministry in his own. During his wonderful pastorate at McKendree, it was no unusual sight to see orthodox Jews and Irish Catholics in attendance, even at the week-day prayer meetings, and yet all men knew his devotion to the ordinances and ritual of his own Church. He stoutly declined to depart from a single syllable of the service of his Church in any office whatsoever. At the marriage altar he presided with most impressive dignity, making beautiful the hour with the strong emphasis which he put upon the words of the compact "signifying unto men the mystical union between Christ and his bride, the Church." At funerals there was also exceptional and ap-

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propriate development of sympathy and power in the manner of his ministry.

Partisan controversies were impossible to him, but his courage was always equal to his convictions. His preaching was marked by such manly sincerity as to command the respect of even those who differed from him. Sensational sermons he abhorred. His gospel was the yea and the amen of the truth as taught in the word of Christ. Those who attended upon his ministry came to audience disarmed and went away convinced without resentment. It was a favorite maxim of his that the gospel message is always strong plus the man behind it. He fully hid himself behind the Word, but exercised a lively and prayerful conscience in keeping himself a vessel sanctified and meet for the Master's use.

Great experiences come through great tests, great trials, great sorrows, oftentimes. This is the heart's oldest secret. The last and supreme trial of this man's life had its compensations.



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It was his own secret, but such as he could not hide. The sandalwood fragrance that filled the house of his last sojourn betrayed the process within. One who entered into the fellowship of that retaining and out-giving inscribed to him certain beautiful original lines. They were found, much thumbed and, as I fancy, tear-stained, amongst his most cherished papers. They are as follows :

### I WILL NOT MURMUR.

BY ROBERT O. SMITH.

I will not murmur, though the clouds hang low,  
And fiercely round me wintry winds should blow;  
But in the tempest I will meekly go,

    If thou wilt guide.

What though I suffer? I am used to pain.  
What though I die? my Lord for me was slain.  
But let me seek, O Christ, yet once again

    In thee to hide!

Let me but find a refuge, Lord, in thee;  
Far from the strife of tongues, O let me be  
Hidden away, my Lord, and ever free

    From all my sin!

Grant me but this, and I will gladly bear  
Of all life's varied ills my bitter share,  
And laugh and shout where others would despair—

    O take me in!

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE MAN AND CITIZEN.

THE Greek ideal of life was a perfect body and a healthy brain. Given so much, dominion followed. The Jew added to this the perfectly developed ethical sense; but the religion of Jesus crowns both with the vision of God. To whom the vision comes, comes life, and to him alone; but the life might well pray, if in its prenatal times there comes a chance of prayer, to be housed in healthy fiber, generously allotted, and harnessed to a brain of mettle and high descent. In its proportions, soundness, and favor the physical frame of Dr. Barbee approached completeness. His head was massive, exhibiting a striking cranial balance; his forehead was broad, with heavy brows arching mild, open eyes, and the features of his face were most pleasingly related. The strong jaw denoted purpose, resistance, courage; but the

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classically modeled chin seemed to stand as a token that strength was softened into gentleness, resistance into kindness. A benign light shone out of his countenance. His shoulders were broad and square, his chest full, and his whole frame erect, except for a slight inclination of the neck and head. He was considerably above medium height, and his weight was much beyond two hundred pounds. His tread was steady, measured, and deliberate. He was always employed, but made haste slowly.

He would have been marked in any assembly as a man of note. His ancestors were soldiers, reformers, and builders of a commonwealth in the wilds. Gaul and Gaelic they sent to him, past the vacant years and "depressed plane of poverty," the best of their blood and spirit. With little aid from masters, and in contradiction of precedents, he made good the pledge of his blood. To sum up the dominant qualities of Dr. Barbee's character would only be to emphasize what this sketch has plainly shown—

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namely, a man who acted always out of his convictions, who was ever moved by fidelity to duty and loyalty to his home and his friends. Above all these, he put on a cloak of fervent charity and lived as in the presence of his God. Rev. S. A. Steel, D.D., writing of the Tennessee Conference session of 1903, the year before Dr. Barbee's death, gave an estimate of him in the following spirited paragraph, printed in the magazine, *Work*:

The Tennessee Conference was in session at Murfreesboro. I took it in *en route*, and enjoyed meeting brethren who were my comrades in other days, and whom I still love in the gospel. The Conference has many men whose names are known and honored throughout Methodism. Perhaps the most venerable-looking man is the Rev. J. D. Barbee, D.D. Dr. Barbee's head is as white as snow, and his crown of gray hairs surmounts a face strong in every feature and a heart that never yet beat false to God or man. He is a man of convictions, as firm set as one of the limestone ribs of his native hills, with leonine courage and fortitude that could stand and be flayed alive, without flinching, for the faith, and yet with

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feelings as tender and as gentle as throb in a woman's heart.

This tribute recalls a sentiment contained in a letter received by him from the late Bishop Haygood, written as far back as 1888, two years before the beginning of his episcopate. "*He* cannot hurt the silent who do their duty," runs the letter. "For the last eight years I have proved that silence pays. I have practiced what I preach. God will bless you and make you a blessing." He was slow to act and given to taking counsel with those whom he trusted. He fortified himself in almost every determined step by securing the judgment of a sage friend, and yet no man was ever more contained in his own courage, nor more able to sustain himself through stress. As deeply as he loved and as completely as he trusted Bishop McTyeire, he did not hesitate to differ from him and express that difference in words direct and strong. Twice they crossed swords, as is shown by the record before me:

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and once it came to the point where the pastor, as a token of his unyielding conviction, put his credentials into the hand of the bishop; but so great was the measure of both that no grudge or "strained relation" remained after the contest was over. During the last years of the bishop they were in close and confidential accord.

A side of the character of Dr. Barbee upon which shone a particularly genial and enduring light was that of his private friendships. There never lived a more loyal or constant friend. His, too, was a soul which drew to it the highest and lowliest alike. The princes of the Church made him their confidant; but the tyro, the student, and the undergraduate itinerant on the remotest mission knew each a nook in that great heart all his own. If a friendship of his life was ever uprooted, it was a catastrophe that brought blood with the plucking up. He counted his wealth in his friendships. A friend to him was a lover and one

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to be beloved. The humblest of his familiars got a chaplet from his hands and a "hail" at the lintel of the door of his heart. The strength and catholicity of his friendship was attested by the religious affiliations of the men who officiated as pallbearers at his funeral. Among them were a Jew, a Roman Catholic, and a man of no faith. A Justice of the Supreme Court of Tennessee and a police officer of the city of Nashville walked side by side in front of his coffin. Such was his wide human sympathy and his simple love of men that in his death he drew all classes together in a common sense of loss.

Humor and a seasonable love of jest are almost inevitable accompaniments of unusual talent or genius. There are exceptions, but they are nearly always taciturn, gloomy, or lacking in human sympathy. The humorous turn and instinct of geniality in Dr. Barbee have been touched upon in another connection. His humor was often quaint. While presiding elder of

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Fayetteville District, a countryman came into town and engaged his services to preside at his wedding, stating at the same time that he had just disposed of a large holding of live stock at fabulous prices, and that he now felt financially justified in launching upon the seas of matrimony. The place designated for the wedding was some miles distant and required the hiring of a livery rig. As there was the best prospect of a good fee, the preacher was proportionately liberal in putting a good appearance on things. He accordingly ordered a trap and driver for the two hours' trip, paying the livery charge of three dollars and fifty cents for the same. The somewhat pretentious outfit departed amid the good wishes and surmises of a few friends in the secret of the groom's recent financial good fortune. The knot was tied, and the preacher returned wearing a mysterious look. When his friends had cornered him in privacy, the question was asked: "What fee did you receive, Brother Barbee?"



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"Guess," said the preacher, still maintaining his secretive air.

Various sums were guessed, all ranging into respectably large figures. "Wrong," returned the preacher to each guess.

"Well, how much was it? Tell us," they insisted.

"I received," said the preacher slowly, "five tens, two fives, and a three." (The three-dollar bank note was then a denomination of common circulation.)

"Good," returned the inquisitor; "five tens, two fives, and a three—that's sixty-three dollars. I congratulate you."

With that the preacher drew from his pocket the fee, consisting of five ten-cent silver pieces, two five-cent pieces, and a three-cent piece—sixty-three cents, and just two dollars and eighty-seven cents short of his livery bill. There was a distressed surprise depicted for a moment on the faces of his friends, but the preacher, true to his buoyant, optimistic spirits,

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laughed heartily at the situation, and presently the merriment became contagious.

He was a royal companion at dinner. He met Dr. Johnson's ideal of a royal soul—a gentleman who would put his legs under a table with you and have it out. I recall, as the years lengthen behind me, a fortnight of association which I had with him and other genuine spirits in San Francisco on an occasion already made note of in this narrative. The long soulful association together in the discharge of mutual duties was concluded in a quiet repast together at the Cliff House, overlooking the face of the Pacific, mysterious with its shadows of the Farallones to the northward and its westward dip in the face of the sunset. The wit and cheer and gracious humor of that highly and sensitively organized nature fixed a memorable day in my life. There was never lack of confidence between us from that time forward. He was unconscious of that thing in him which others allowed to be greatness, and

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this made him the most agreeable and companionable of men.

The view that the obligations of the ministry take from the man the right to hold and express political convictions is a modern heresy which looks toward an exclusiveness in citizenship dangerous and disruptive. With this heresy Dr. Barbee had no sympathy. He was a careful and intelligent student of both *local* and *national politics*; but though he was zealous to fulfill the obligations of a citizen, he never entangled himself with partisanship nor went beyond the exercise of the simplest duties of the suffrage. He read with care and critical judgment in his young manhood the State papers of John C. Calhoun, and this reading led to his renunciation of the doctrines of the Whigs. Grover Cleveland was his ideal amongst modern statesmen. He did not parade his political views any more than he did his denominational preferences, but to those who had a right to know he was very positive in the expression of

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political opinions. It was a cardinal tenet of his creed that the minister of Jesus Christ should not obtrude party politics of any nature upon the congregations to which he ministers. For years he waged a fight for the establishment of this principle. Perhaps no contest of his life cost him more in a certain loss of favor.

During his pastorate at McKendree he was elected, entirely without his own solicitation, to the Chaplaincy of the Tennessee State Senate. This office he accepted not as a political favor but as an additional door or opportunity in his ministry. He was prompt in his attention to the calls of the position, but declined to receive the *salary* which had been voted him from the State treasury. To the President of the Senate he wrote, in declining the proffered salary, a characteristic letter, reciting the fact that the *Church* paid him a salary which he considered ample, and that, as he had from the first regarded the Chaplaincy as an incidental opportunity in his ministry, he could not con-

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sent to receive any *compensation* for his services therein. Governor Turney, in 1895, appointed him to membership on the State Board of Charities. To the details of this cause he gave enthusiastic attention, visiting the jails, prisons, asylums, and schools under the care of the Board. He also delivered addresses in different places in the interest of the unfortunate classes, and otherwise sought to benefit them through the function committed to him. The Legislature made no appropriation for the expenses of the Board; consequently these undertakings were all at his own cost. But to serve the poor and the unfortunate he felt to be a call from his Master.

In the passing away of the men of the generation to which Dr. Barbee belonged passes the old order of that unique and apostolic ministry which the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, once maintained to the people of color in our midst. His relations to these people, especially to those who remained loyal to our

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own Methodism, were most intimate and brotherly. He had been a missionary to the negroes before the Civil War, his diaries showing that in most of his pastorates his Sunday afternoons were given to the slaves of near-by plantations. When the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was set up, he remained steadfast in his friendship, and was to the day of his death a counselor sought by the leading men of the race. Even after he became distinguished as a preacher and leader in his own Church, he delighted to minister to them. He has been often seen in his office chatting with a colored preacher or other representative of the race. They were addressed by him as "brother" or "sister;" and if one had a title, he was careful to use it. He has been seen to rise from his seat and salute Bishop Lane with every mark of courtesy and deference. It was the way of the man in him.

For a long time he carried, unaided and alone, the financial burdens of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in the city of

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Nashville. A Southerner of Southerners, he had in his heart a true Southern man's love for and interest in those who had once been slaves. In their ability to rise and fulfill their destiny he believed, and was amongst those who held that it was peculiarly the right, as it was the duty, of the people of the South to help and direct them to this end.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### HOME LIFE.

THE last test of a man's gentleness and honor is his life in its most private living. By that test religious professions stand or fall. Dr. Barbee's home life was simple and beautiful. In the sanctities of his fireside he was nowise different from the man which the world saw walking in the white light which for more than fifty years beat about his itinerant path. As a husband he was that chivalrous, knightly man of whom the love-dreamers have often dreamed but whom they have seldom seen. As a father he was a type of the Old Testament Jewish sire, who ordered his house after the commandment. The devotion of his children to him, both in life and in memory, is a testimony to his domestic faithfulness and love.

Any one who ever saw the inside of that home, or came near to its holy of holies, re-



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members something that, with him, will forever exalt manhood and glorify womanhood. For many years the wife and mother was an invalid. Her patient, suffering grace was equaled only by the loyal love and tender thoughtfulness of her husband. Esteemed as he was for social fellowships, and admired as he was for commanding talents and a faithful public service, all who loved him, all who called him friend, saw in his knightly devotion to his invalid wife the very crown of his manhood and grace. He nursed her through many illnesses, and several times suffered the sorrow and agony of giving her up to the grave, to be filled with joy when Death passed by and left her to him in the morning of his vigil. He carried her about for years in his arms, and there was never a moment when she was out of his consciousness. For him the world held but one woman, and that one had the uttermost of his thought. When away from her, he wrote every day; and when his children were away, he

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wrote daily to each of them. His last service on earth was done to his wife, and his last thoughts were of her. His last writing was a letter to one of his sons concerning his own and his wife's health.

To Dr. Barbee were born eight children. His first child, a son, died in infancy. The second, James D. Barbee, Jr., a successful business man and a highly respected gentleman, resides in the State of Mississippi. The third son, Holland McTyeire, named for the bishop whom he loved so much, died in tender boyhood. The fourth, Osmond Summers, named for the Church's distinguished editor, died in his twenty-first year and in the promise of a splendid manhood. His illness was a lingering one, and the father's devotion was intensified. He never left the bedside of his suffering boy, for days together not removing his clothes to rest. During this illness the son was by the father led to accept Christ as a personal Saviour. The experience as described by the father

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was a thrilling one, the conversion taking place at an early hour of the morning. Sadly but resignedly he yielded the child of his pride to death, feeling that in him he had the answer to his prayer daily cried into the ears of the Father: "O God, that my children may be saved!" The fifth son, David Rankin, has been for several years a well-known newspaper writer, having represented a leading journal of the South in New York. He is at present news editor of the Memphis *Commercial-Appeal*. The sixth child was his only daughter, Mary Ready, named for his own mother. This child died in her thirteenth year. Her death affected the father profoundly, mellowing his spirit perceptibly and making him even more affectionate and tender than before to his remaining children. From this time forward he became to them more as a big brother, though the paternal character was never lessened in him. The seventh and eighth children, both sons, survive. They are Robert

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Wendel and John Ford House, the latter named for his long-time bosom friend, the late Colonel House, of Clarksville.

The devotion of Dr. Barbee's sons to him was often matter of remark by distinguished people who knew him. Each one seemed jealous to show him the greatest attention and receive the greatest in return. It was no unusual sight to see him walking down town in the morning surrounded by his four sons, and they often and often gathered at his office in the afternoon for nothing other than the happy privilege of walking home in his company. They loved to hear him talk, and indulged in no more comment or conversation than was necessary to keep him under obligation to respond. When he preached, they were always present to hear him. This devotion touched him, and in return he gave to them his perfect confidence. He took a lively interest in all they did, and thought and carefully advised them in every exigency. Their worthy efforts

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he commended; their faults he rebuked as only he could. Quite naturally they inherited his thoughts and reflected his opinions in all important matters. When the time came for them to leave home in quest of their own fortunes, his heart was put to a strange trial. It was what a mother feels when she sees the daughter depart. But he did not restrain nor dictate; he only said: "Son, there is a place for you at home; come back when you will." On the back of a receipted bill which was partly his and partly that of a son's, and which he had paid without the son's knowledge, runs this indorsement: "Do not be offended, my boy; I do this with convenience and out of a father's heart. God bless you forever."

His daughter-in-law, Mrs. J. D. Barbee, Jr., daughter of the late Dr. W. C. Johnson, of the Memphis Conference, was *his* child from the moment she entered his home to the time of his passing. He seemed to have bestowed upon her the affection which he had once laid in the

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dust with the daughter of his own body. No difference in the treatment of the daughter-in-law could be seen; and well might it have been so, for she proved a daughter truly to the parents of her husband.

The family altar was reared in the home at the beginning. The sons grew up with a fondness for the hour of family worship, a means of grace shared with the servants of the home. The reading of the Scriptures by the father was most impressive; and this, with his exposition of them, is recognized as the secret in that household out of which grew the patience and the love that were its light. This was a man who saw afflictions, but in the midst of them he found God his "Maker who gave songs in the night."

In the latter years of his life Dr. Barbee took up the reading of books in which his sons were interested. As the reading progressed, he discussed and criticised the books for their benefit. In this he not only assisted them

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in the way of intellectual advance, but kept in their fellowship. He frequently made them presents of books, in most of which appeared, written in his own hand, the following: "Remember, my son:

'The tissues of life to be  
We weave with colors all our own;  
And in the field of destiny  
We reap as we have sown.'

Many passages and incidents in Dr. Barbee's domestic life, illustrating his marital and paternal devotion and his tenderness, are recalled. In one of his written discourses, the subject of which was "Two Sparrows Sold for a Farthing," this occurs: "About two years ago I had an experience which illustrated this text. It occurred on a certain stormy Friday night. My wife was absent visiting her relatives in the city. My bairns had lisped their evening prayers at my knee and were asleep. I was alone, writing at my desk. The storm was wild without. I was suddenly

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roused and shocked by a crash against the window pane just over the truckle bed where my little daughter lay. I lifted my eyes and beheld a small bird fluttering against the window and apparently trying to enter. I arose and, passing out through the door, came quickly behind the bird and caught it. It resisted and cried, struggling for liberty; but I held it and carried it to a place of safety, where it remained until morning. Just as day was breaking, I carried it to the open door and released it. With a whirr and a cry of freedom it shot through the air toward the rising sun. 'Fear ye not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.' "

When in a reminiscential mood, he would talk affectionately of the horse with which he learned to plow as a boy, and of his dog. During the illness of his son Osmond some one gave the boy a fine Maltese kitten. It was wild and shy, but took kindly to the father of its new master, who coaxed and petted it into



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devotion. When the son was gone, the cat became the object of the father's tenderest care. He fondled and caressed it to the end of its life, because it had belonged to the boy he loved.

Notwithstanding her almost lifelong invalidism, the beauty and happiness of this home were due half to the spirit and devotion of the wife. She was one of the daughters who attained to perfection through suffering. She devoutly believed, and her life was one of prayer and trust. God's standard of holiness is high, but some of his children have obeyed in their hearts to please him. Souls become fine not by chance, but by patiently suffering the will of God. This daughter in the house of her Father made obedience the ruling trait of her life—obedience to God, her Church, her husband, and to the calls of duty about her. "Her children rise up and call her blessed."

The wife and mother did not long survive the husband and father. She entered into rest

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on July 21, 1905. It is with them as they wished it to be in their lives. Together they sleep a peaceful sleep in beautiful Mt. Olivet, with the dust of half their children reposing about them.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE RIPENED SHEAF.

IN June, 1901, a year before the meeting of the General Conference of 1902, although he had assurance of a strong vote to continue him at the head of the publishing interests of the Church, Dr. Barbee through the public prints asked his friends not to consider his name in connection with the place. By this act he voluntarily closed his official career in the Church. His reasons for this course were briefly stated. They were entirely personal and patriotic. No word of bitterness or resentment mingled in his manifesto; but, on the contrary, it breathed a spirit of brotherly good will and charity. It was a widely shared belief that but for this declination he would have been returned by the suffrage of the General Conference. He was of this view himself, and was urged by not a few to leave his friends

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to settle the issue; but preferring the perfect peace of the Church to his own advantage, he took his decision and made it final. It was the mature and representative act of a man who had walked his entire way in conscious integrity.

As in the first stages of the controversy, a mass of approving correspondence now accumulated upon his hands. This correspondence revealed the extent and genuineness of the friendship upon which he might have counted in a contest. His public response showed the man in a new light; it rebuked uncharity and disarmed criticism. Having suffered hasty and unjust judgment, he was able to forego without bitterness or murmuring the all but certain chance of triumph over his censors. He met destiny in those awful silences that brood at the feet of God, and made answer, ordering his cause as one who saw his Judge. The time-ward side and the eternity side corresponded. He heard the voice of his God not less distinct-

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ly than the voice of his brethren. His decision brought him great personal satisfaction; moreover, he was now more than ever intrenched in the heart of the Church. He now lived, as always, each day for itself; nothing disturbed his order, nothing diverted him from his course.

What he thought of the quality of this and his once so much criticised act after all things connected with them had become closed and settled history may be seen from the following excerpt from a letter addressed to a fellow-minister:

Concerning my act as contained in the published card, I have only to say that I was guided by the best intelligence which I could command and the dictates of a pure conscience; and I believed that in that instance, as in the matter of my administration generally, I was doing what was right and best. I do not claim to be infallible, or to have made no mistake in any act or fact of my whole career in charge of this great interest; but I do claim that I have walked before God in my integrity.

To another friend he wrote:

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I know how to be a pastor, most of my life having been spent in that work—the most delightful work that any preacher can be engaged in. Therefore, when my time ends here, I shall return to that loved employ, if God will, and continue in it till the sunset comes.

He now settled down to the preparation of his final report to be submitted to the General Conference, mention of the extraordinary character of which has been made elsewhere. But, though during his administration the House had so greatly prospered and was able to show so vast an increment of capital, he was retiring in the same abundant poverty in which he had spent his former ministry. His modest homestead was encumbered with debt, and he had no resources outside of his monthly salary. Commenting on this retirement, the *Texas Christian Advocate* said editorially:

In all his official transactions he has put himself in the background and the Church in the forefront. Millions of Church money have passed through his hands during his twelve

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years of service in his present position, and no one has ever even dreamed of the improper use of a dollar or a cent of this money. He has handled these interests with scrupulous honesty, and by his self-sacrifice and devotion the Publishing House stands out as one of the most solvent and prosperous institutions in all the country.

The General Conference by special act continued his salary as Book Agent from the time of its adjournment in May until the meeting of his Conference in October. If a further mark of affection and confidence had been needed to reassure him in his moment of retirement, this act of the general body furnished it. It came as a token from the whole Church, a testimonial, added to multitudes of others, that he had kept the love of a great people while passing through an ordeal such as has tried few men.

The months which immediately followed were full of quietness. The man was now past his seventieth year, but he walked with a steady

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step. A cheerful joy spoke in his voice, and a smile, serene as day, settled upon his face. Those nearest him saw the ripening of his life. Relaxed from a long strain, his spirits flowed genially and his moods were like a day in harvest—mild, unvexed, and self-rewarding. The sunshine fell aslant upon him; the shadows were all behind; the full day beckoned from before. While the inner man renewed itself, the outer shone with an ultimate grace. Thoughtfulness and courtesy, always the manner of him, were emphasized. Into the place where he had so long been master he came daily, but always softly and tarrying briefly, lest he might tax affection or draw unduly upon friendship. His bearing in this was such as one might shape into a parable for the gentle, or turn into a song for the great of heart.

As he walked in these days he saw into the house of the Father, and out of it came to him words unlawful to be uttered. Once he had sung with the Quaker:



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"I know not where his islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air;  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond his love and care."

But now he sang in the confidence of an older  
psalmody:

"One sweetly solemn thought  
Comes to me o'er and o'er:  
I'm nearer my Father's home to-day  
Than I ever have been before."

His faith was a comprehensive grasp upon the unseen, not a prying, microscopic investigation into its details. He accepted the Bible as a Book inspired in the absolute sense. Its promises were yea and amen—the sufficient pledge of eternal things. Others might seek to qualify the letter of its claims in the interest of its spirit; to him the letter and the spirit proceeded from the same source and rested upon the same divine authority. The ground of the critics was to him not a *terra incognita*, but it was without enticements. The Bible which he used in the private devotions

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and pulpit work of his last years descended to this writer as a mark of love. Its pages show that a reverent hand passed over them while a reverent heart and eye gleaned from their abundance. The thumbed and precious volume, as it came to my hands, contained a scarlet bookmark, to which was attached a tiny gold heart and a cross of the same material. They were, in their times, simple chance gifts of affection, but unconsciously they tokened his love for and his estimate of the lively oracles. He was a Bible reader, and this passion grew stronger as the sunset hour came on.

At the session of the Tennessee Conference which met in October, 1902, being the fiftieth anniversary of his admission into the itinerancy, he appeared and asked for an appointment, as he had done in the days of his youth. He was received by his brethren with tokens of unfeigned love, and with a formal recognition of the completion of his half century of ministerial labors. The Nashville District was the

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one appointment in the Church which all felt should fall to him through the logic of justice and propriety, and in making this assignment Bishop Wilson, President of the Conference, only met the popular and strongly expressed desire both in the Church and outside it. The appointment was hailed in the city of Nashville, as elsewhere in the connection, with expressions of the most genuine satisfaction. In this his case was happier than his Master's; for he came to his own and his own received him.

While serving as presiding elder of the Nashville District—his last appointment—he frequently expressed to his children and intimate friends the belief that he was doing the best work of his life. He entered upon the discharge of these last duties with a peculiar zest. He was happy and contented, while he ripened toward the kingdom of rest. His hold on the city of Nashville was stronger, if possible, than ever before. In a sense he became, as once before, the pastor of the whole community,



REV. J. D. BARBEE, D.D.

LAST AND BEST PORTRAIT TAKEN IN HIS SEVENTY-FIRST YEAR.



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marrying and burying more people than any other minister, and his popularity grew steadily to the end. In February, 1904, he was stricken with pneumonia. From this he rallied to a degree, but it was a token of the end. His heart action was weakened, and it was foreseen by his physician and friends that his life was rounding toward its sleep. During his months of sickness he received from the people of Nashville, and from the widest reaches of his acquaintance, such assurances of sympathy and love as gladdened his heart. He was deeply and sincerely in love with life, but felt that to die was gain, in that it would transport him into the presence of his Lord. He died suddenly and without warning on December 5, 1904.

His last illness is thus described by his long-time friend and family physician, Dr. A. M. Trawick:

In February, 1904, so sore was his illness that his life was despaired of. One day I

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walked into his room and heard him in his delirium preaching to his nurse. He said: "Now, in all things of this life, be sure you are right; do right at any cost, and although you may be misunderstood by your friends, God will take care of you, and all will come out for the best." On December 5 I was hastily summoned to his bedside. His wife was just recovering from a prolonged illness, and the nurse had been discharged. I saw at once that he was in an extremely dangerous condition. He was seated in his chair, and I insisted that he should go at once to bed. He protested, saying: "I must not go to bed; there is no one to care for my wife; I cannot leave her." The case being desperate, he was finally persuaded. Being composed in his bed, he said: "I feel a little better." At that moment two friends called at the door to inquire after his case. I stood a moment at the door and answered their inquiry in a low voice. In that moment the chariot came; I heard a sound and turned instantly back. He was gone. And thus died one of the purest and best men of earth.

It had been his lifelong wish to die in full work, and this was granted him. Only a few hours from the pulpit, he lay down and died without a pain or a struggle. His favorite

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poem, and one which he frequently quoted, beautifully describes the manner of his change from labor to rest :

“Sunset and evening star,

And one clear call for me!

And may there be no moaning of the bar

When I put out to sea ;

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,

Too full for sound and foam,

When that which drew from out the boundless deep

Turns again home!

Twilight and evening bell,

And after that the dark!

And may there be no sadness of farewell

When I embark!

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place

The flood may bear me far,

I hope to see my Pilot face to face

When I have crossed the bar.”



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### FUNERAL—TRIBUTE BY BISHOP HOSS.

THE funeral of Dr. Barbee was conducted by Bishop Hoss, assisted by other ministers, from McKendree Church, Nashville, December 7, 1904. A great concourse of people from every walk of life attended and paid in sorrowful silence a tribute to his worth and greatness. His pallbearers were selected from the circle of his personal friends, and they represented almost every respectable religious belief of the city. Many distinguished public men were in attendance. It was a day of sincere mourning not only to his home city but to tens of thousands throughout the widest reaches of the land. The press of the city and the country paid tributes to his virtue and those exceptional traits which had become so familiar to the public.

It was desired to have Bishop Hoss write a

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concluding chapter for this volume, since he had known so long and intimately the man to whose memory it is devoted; but his absence in South America at the time the volume was made ready for the press made the realization of this plan impossible. In lieu of this chapter, and as a most fitting close of these memoirs, the tribute paid by him to the memory of Dr. Barbee at his funeral is presented. It is as follows:

### A TRIBUTE TO DR. BARBEE.

(From the Sermon Delivered by Bishop Hoss.)

The outward history of Dr. Barbee's life has been so fully chronicled in the newspapers that it is not necessary for me to dwell upon it at any length. He was born in Lawrence County, Ala., March 16, 1832; and died in Nashville, Tenn., December 5, 1904. His parents, though not in affluent circumstances, were excellent and self-respecting people. His mother in particular was a woman of strong character and a devout Christian. The touch and thrill of her influence was upon him as long as he lived. After he was threescore years of age, I have

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heard him speak of her with the tenderest affection.

The educational advantages of his youth were limited, but he made most excellent use of them, and acquired a fine mastery of his mental faculties and a large store of valuable knowledge. One of his early dreams was to become a country physician. His imagination was fascinated by the opportunities of that vocation. But God had other plans for him. Before he reached his majority he was radically converted and consciously called to the ministry of the gospel. Without delay he became obedient to the heavenly vision, and in the autumn of 1852 joined the Tennessee Conference as an itinerant preacher. How honorable his long connection was with that body is matter of history. First and last he filled circuits, stations, and districts with distinguished ability and success, and for seventeen years he was one of the Book Agents of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. At the mature age of thirty-four years he was united in marriage to Miss Margaret Rankin, with whom he lived in ideal love for the rest of his life. Were I to enter into further detail, there would be no limit to my remarks; but my purpose is rather to make a brief appraisal of his character than to furnish a sketch of his life.

As a preacher he was always studious. He

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took his ministry seriously, and tried to discharge its obligations in the fear of God. Never once was he guilty of bringing trifling themes into the pulpit, or of indulging in thoughtless harangues. From the beginning, he did his best to interpret and expound the Word of God. The range of his reading was not wide, but it included great books. He knew his English Bible as few men know it, reading it both for devotional stimulus and for intellectual quickening. The two men who became his masters in theology were Richard Watson and Albert Taylor Bledsoe. In general literature he was especially fond of a few of the great poets, such as Shakespeare, Milton, and Burns. Constant contact with authors of this class gave him a vocabulary as rich and as copious as one might care to possess. The dignity, propriety, and stateliness of his English were noted by all who heard him. He rarely slipped in his grammar, and always chose the exactly right word with which to express his thought.

Though saturated with the Arminian theology, he did not preach it as a mere echo, repeating the *ipsissima verba* of the fathers as if that were the test and standard of orthodoxy. On the contrary, he was a vigorous, original, and independent thinker, who knew how to recast the old truths in his own mind and to

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give them a fresh setting and statement to the world. The energy with which he spoke was the result of the positive and reasoned convictions that he had reached. Herein is the explanation of the possibly undue emphasis that he occasionally laid on certain aspects of truth. At times he was inspiringly eloquent. Before the Annual Conferences he was often heard with great delight. In fact, he was a preacher's preacher, and never had fuller command of all his resources than when he was addressing an audience of his brother ministers. More than once, on such occasions, I have known him to rise to the level of true greatness.

As a man he was singularly and instinctively pure. He had a perfect loathing for whatever is unclean in act and speech and thought. His conversation with men was so free from all taint of evil that it could have given no offense to good women. I measure my words deliberately when I say that, in this respect, he was worthy to rank with the best and the holiest. Joined with this uncommon purity and largely the result of it, he possessed a most remarkable strength of character. He had a magnificent head on his shoulders and a habit of putting his foot down like a man. There was not a cowardly fiber in his whole being. He had a wholesome contempt for weakness which sometimes reached the limit of impatience. When

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he had made up his mind and taken his stand, nothing could drive him from it. Just where strength shades off into obstinacy it is difficult to tell, and Dr. Barbee had the glorious faculty of being a little obstinate under circumstances involving conviction and principle. Withal he was a most affectionate man. Underneath an occasional brusqueness of demeanor there lay a heart as kind and sunny as a June morning. In his own home he was a model of gentleness. No more considerate or chivalrous husband ever lived. His love for his wife was of such dignity that it went hand in hand even with the vow he made to her in marriage. To his sons he was the most accessible and approachable of fathers. Long years ago a sweet and gentle little daughter was called from his embrace into paradise, and the memory of her brought often the mist before his eyes and was a softening influence on his spirit. To his friends he was a pattern of fidelity. He gave himself to them without reserve, and seemed not the least afraid that he would do too much to show the sincerity of his affection for them. While he did not uncover his soul to the multitude, he was absolutely open to those whom he found worthy of his confidence. Of my personal relations to him I dare not trust myself to speak. Some things are too sacred for utterance.

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As a Christian, Dr. Barbee was marked by many decided characteristics. First of all, he was a perfectly heroic believer. I have never known a man whose acceptance of Christ and his revelation was more complete. Nor was this due to a credulous temperament. He was anything except credulous. On the contrary, his attitude toward all questions that came before him was one of inquiry. He was much given to holding his judgment in suspense. But he had settled, partly by the operations of his reflective understanding, and partly by spiritual experience, the matter of Christ's authority over his soul, and he seemed never to waver for a moment. His humility was wonderful. He disliked to talk about himself, and especially about his religious life. It would have been as impossible for him to make a vaunt or boast of his moral excellencies as to fly. The habit which some Christians have of stripping their souls stark naked to be gazed upon was terribly abhorrent to him. He had reticences and privacies which he could not bring himself to exhibit. On proper occasions he would confess Christ, and would avow his personal allegiance to him; but he did not enter into the minute details of his religious experience. The crown of all his excellencies was his charity, which, I take it, was not a native growth, but the product of God's grace working through

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the manifold occurrences of his life. In God's own way he had come to be very forbearing and patient. I am not so forgetful of all the proprieties as to speak one word here that would revive the slightest unpleasant feeling in any quarter; but I should be untrue to myself and false to my deceased friend if I did not say that, having stood very close to him in the great crisis of his history, I never once saw him lose his balance nor utter a sentence that was not fit to fall from a Christian's lips. Neither the harsh criticism of his enemies nor the wide and sharp divergence of view concerning emergent issues which was entertained by many of his friends caused him to become bitter in his temper or in his conversation.

More I should like to add, but there is not time. I am glad to be here, and to take part in this solemn service. Dr. Barbee expected it of me, and for no consideration would I have failed to come. It is fit that he should be brought here to old McKendree, in which his ministry culminated and from which he helped to bury so many others. Hence we shall carry him to beautiful Mt. Olivet and lay his body away in love, to sleep the last long sleep till the resurrection morning breaks in splendor on the world. Meanwhile his spirit is with God.